

The Spiritual

14)

WARFARE,

Or some

SERMONS

CONCERNING

The Nature of Mortification, right
Exercise, and spiritual Advantages
thereof:

WHEREUNTO

Are added other two Sermons, con-
cerning the Mystery of Contentment:

B E I N G

The Substance of Ten Sermons, newly corrected
and amended.

By Mr. *ANDREW GRAY*, late Minister of the
Gospel at *GLASGOW*.

Col. 3. 5. Mortifie therefore your Members, &c.
Heb. 13. 5. Let your Conversation be without
Covetousness, &c.

EDINBURGH,

Printed by the Heirs and Successors of *ANDREW*
ANDERSON, Anno DOM. M.DCC.XV.

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Unto the sincere Sin-mor- tifying, and Soul-con- tentment-seeking Chri- stian.

Dear and loving Friend,

AS the Name of the Precious Author (who now enjoy-
eth what he then aspired to, when he Preached these
following Sermons) will, no doubt, ingratiate them
to thee, so we are perswaded, that the Divine Subjects
here treated upon, when perused by thee, whose serious de-
sign is to study and aspire to what is here pressed, may not
only prove effectual to increase thy Esteem of the worthy
Author, and thy respects to his Works; but also may highly
advance thy Soul in the begun Work of Mortification of
Sin of dying to the World, and of having the World cruci-
fied to thee, that so thou may possess thy Soul in patience,
and sit down as a contented one, in every state whatso-
ever, good or bad, letting patience have its perfect Work.
O! how timely hath the Lord begun with the blessed Au-
thor, to make him not only acquainted in his own expe-
rience as a Scholar, with the hardest lessons of Christi-
anity, but also to make him a practical Preacher of the
spiritual and successful method of learning these so intricate
lessons, and of the advantages of studying, or disadvan-
tages, by the neglect of the study of them. This we dare say,
that in perusing of them, thou shalt find him a Work-Man, who
(if he were alive) needed not to be ashamed, nor afraid of thy
censure, if thou be a real Student in these spiritual duties thy self.

To the Reader.

For these two or three Things (as eminent Perfections in a *Tough*) are most remarkable in him, First, That from the Speculations and metaphysical Contemplations of Schools, he was immediately, as it were, rapt, not only into the Contemplation, but also soul-experiencing and powerful preaching of the most mysterious Points of Christian Profession and Practice. Secondly, That in the handling of these Mysteries, he was free of all youthly Vanity and Affection of humane Literature, (though he had more than common Abilities therein) and having renounced the hidden Things of Dishonesty, not walking in Craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, he preached the Word of God, not as the Word of Man, but as the Word of God, commending himself to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of God. Thirdly, That he was gifted of God with such Plainness of Speech, and with such an open Door of Utterance, in delivering these Mysteries, that he did outstrip, and overreach many of those who entered into the Lord's Vineyard long before him, the Lord verifying that in him, which is, 2 Cor. 3. 17. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty. All which Singularities and Eminencies of a spiritual Preacher to have been his special Mercy from the Lord, to fit him to be eminently a burning and shining Light, for the Space of about two Years in our western Climate, is manifest from what of his Works have already come forth to the View of the World, and doth now further appear by these excellent and divine Sermons, upon these two most necessary, but little studied, and less practised Points of Christian Doctrine, viz. Mortification of Lusts, and spiritual Contentment, never heretofore printed; wherein the zealous Servant of God endeavoureth to awaken this secure Generation unto the Study of these so excellent and necessary Duties, by laying before us the Necessity of these Duties, and the Advantages attending the Study of them, and the Prejudice and Disadvantages accompanying the Neglecters of the said Duties; as also, to encourage and strengthen in the Way, all such as have begun the spiritual Conflict against

Sin, and are aiming at the Perfection in the Study of spiritual Contentment. He not only presseth the Duties, but also pointeth out the right Means whereby a Christian may be helped to attain at last Victory over his Lusts, and so lie down contentedly with Jonah, under the Shadow of his Gourd. Jon. 3. 6. And be satisfied with Elijah, to hide himself by the Brook Cherith, and to drink of the Brook, and to have the Ravens to, feed him there, 1 Kings 17. 3, 4. and to say with David in an universal Resignation of himself to the Will of God, 2 Sam. 15. 26. Behold, here am I, let him do with me as seemeth good unto him: And withall thou shalt find intermixed Soul-reviving and comforting Resolutions of the most pressing Soul-exercises, accompanying such as seriously set about these so much soul-concerning Duties of Sin's Mortification, and spiritual Contentment under every Lot. That you may read with the same Affection that the holy Author preached, and reap the same Blessing which was with much Prayer wrestled for by him, to his hearers, wherein he was not unheard, is the earnest Prayer of his Soul to God; who is

Thy Servant in the Gospel of our
dearest Lord and Saviour.

A. S.

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The Spiritual

WARFARE.

SERMON I.

Rom. 7. 28. *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?*

WHen the Sword of the Justice of God was coming down upon us, then our blessed Lord Jesus, in the infinite depth of his unsearchable Love and Compassion to self-destroying sinners, cryed forth with a loud Voice, that Justice might hold the Hand: And as that Ram sacrificed for Isaac, so was he willingly content to be caught in a thicket, and to become a spotless, and everlasting sacrifice for sinners. He was content to be bruised, that so we might pass free, and his Fathers Hand might be turned upon the little ones, but notwithstanding he hath died for our Sins; and risen for our righteousness, yet hath he given to all his followers a spiritual Warfare to accomplish, so that they should be continually taken up in contending against Principalities and Powers, and spiritual Wickednesses in high Places; or as the Words are rendred by some, we conceive more appositely in heavenly things. And certainly, there is no

discharge in this War, neither any Interruption while we are on this side of Eternity: we confess, God might easily have served an Inhibition on all our spiritual Enemies, that they should no more oppose themselves against a Believer after Justification, *he*, in the depth of his unsearchable Wisdom, and we may say likewise infinite love towards his own, hath so contrived their way to Heaven, that through many Afflictions and Tribulations, in our spiritual Warfare, we must enter there. It is much indeed for a Christian to die a Victor after War, though not a Triumpher, that must come after Death, and the trophies and rewards of our Victory, shall then be fully given to us, when our feet shall stand within the gates of the new Jerusalem, and when we shall receive these two Glorious and everlasting Badges of our Victory, *a Crown set upon our Head, having this written upon it, It endureth for ever: A motto* to which could never be ingraven upon any Crown here below; and *a Palm put in our Hands*; and then indeed we shall sing, as those that divide the Spoil, when we have led Captivity Captive, and sit down upon a Throne which is established for ever. And we conceive, much divine Reflection and holy Contemplation upon that precious recompence of reward, and that high and unconceivable Pitch of Dignity unto which Believers and Overcomers are to be advanced, would make us with much Cheerfulness and Alacrity undergo this spiritual Warfare: And yet all our triumphing is not suspended, till our war be ended. Believe me, there is more real joy in the Victory and Vanquishing of one Lust, yea more divine Satisfaction in a serious pursuit and contending with them, though with very small success to our Apprehension, than in the actual Enjoyment, and Fruition of all thy Lusts. Thou may hide Sin under thy Tongue, and have it pleasant to thy Taste, yet at last it shall be as the Gall of Asps, and the Poison of Dragons. O! put out

so much holy Generosity, and Spiritual Ambition, that though Satan should offer unto them all the Kingdoms of the World, that thou may fall down and worship him, thou mayest cry forth in holy Zeal and Indignation, *Get thee behind me Satan.* O! that deceitful Oratory, and malicious Guile, wherewith he ensnareth immortal Souls, and brings them into Subjection. O! but the Depths of Satan are subtle and great; and he is a Man of Understanding that can draw them out, and not be ignorant of his Devices: And except we be helped by the Candle of the Lord, that discovereth the inward Parts of the Belly, to know these mysterious Subtilties of him, whose Name is a *Deceiver*, they will remain still Riddles and Mysteries to us.

But since we are compassed about with this *Body of Death*, and there is a *Law in our Members* rebelling against the Law of our Mind. We should be much in groaning for the Day of our Redemption, when the lawful Captive may be delivered, and the Prey taken from the Mighty, and that blessed Decree may come forth, O *Prisoners of Hope*, go forth and shew your selves. We are afraid, that the Christians of this Generation have proclaimed a Cessation of Arms, & have concluded a Treaty of Peace with their Lusts, and a League not only offensive, but (shall I add this) even defensive; not only that we shall offend our lusts, but shall defend them. And if once we have sealed this Treaty and Agreement with our Idols, what can they require more at our Hands? We conceive we may sadly allude unto that Word, That there is not one amongst Forty Thousand in *Israel*, with whom there is a Spear and a Shield seen in contending in this holy Warfare. O! can such a Delusion as this overtake you, that ye can be an Overcomer without fighting? is your Strength greater than those that have gone before you, that you think you can accomplish this War in one Day, and pursue your Enemies till ye overtake and consume them? O! when shall that Day

be, then we shall be groaning forth daily this mournful dittay, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death?*

In the Words we conceive first, there is a sweet and pleasant emphasis in that Word (*Me*) speaking so much, that if infinite power and grace were capable of any Limitation, and there could be any bounds fixed to it, *Paul* did conceive he was the bounds and limits of infinite Power and Grace; if there were an impossibility for grace to save any sinner, it should be impossible for grace to have saved him who was the chiefest of sinners, and less than the least of all Saints. And if each Christian did look upon himself as the greatest debtor to the Justice of God, his debt to the infinite grace of God should appear more singular.

Secondly, We may perceive, that a Christians happiness doth consist in a sweet exchange of Dominion and governments; One Sin doth reign in his mortal Body, and he is under the Dominion of his Lusts, but then grace doth step in, and exautorats and dethrones the former King, & doth reign in the temple of our Heart. This is clear, *Rom. 5*: Last: and that is a remarkable Word which is there *That grace may reign*; the Word in the original doth signifie so much, *that grace may play the King βασιλευσιν*, and this fulness of graces Dominion as that the Apostle would be at here. And certainly there is no repentance of this exchange of Masters. There is much noise & rumour of complaints amongst people in these days of the exchange of Governments from one species of Government to another: We shall leave these debates unto Men who desire to exercise their spirits about them: but sure we are of this that those who are given up to this change, shall have it pass as most legitimate and lawful, by the divine Approbation, both of Angels, and of the Souls of just Men now made perfect.

Thirdly, The way that *Paul* taketh here to propo

his complaint under the strong prevalency of the Body of Death, by way of Question, *Who shall deliver me?* doth not import any Hesitation about his Perswasion of certainty. That he at last should sing a Song of Triumph over his Lusts; but only that it would be among the Riches, and the most singular Monuments and Trophies of the Victory of Christ, to save him. *Paul* did (no doubt) conceive that amongst all the royal monuments of Christs conquest that should be, as it were, hanged about the walls of that higher and glorious Palace. *Paul* should be put in the Highest, as having least merit to bring him there, (if there could be any merit at all) and most Love and Grace,

Now to come more particularly to the Words, after *Paul* hath most divinely set forth that woful Opposition and Contradiction, that was betwixt the unrenewed Part and the renewed, and what strong Dominion sin had over him, he doth in these Words breathe out a sweet desire to be delivered, not only from his actual Corruption, but from his original Guilt, which here he calleth *the Body of this Death*, not only because Corruption is a thing which may be easily discerned and known to us, it being (so to speak) a thing which may fall under the object of our sight, being no spirit but a Body; but also because of these great multitudes of Corruptions that flow from that root of original Sin, it having so many different Members, and Parts which are so diversified, and so compleat, that they may make up a Body, which Body, if it be entertained, shall certainly bring and occasion Death, so when he is under the strong Convictions of his guilt, and hath had a compleat discovery of himself, you may see his Exercises holden forth in these Words, *O wretched Man*; the Word in the Original *ταλαιωρος*, signifieth one that is wearied with troublesom and continual combats, with little apparent success, and this doth certainly import, he that was a Man much and continually taken up in wrestling against

against his Corruptions and endeavouring to bring them into Subjection unto the Obedience of Christ Jesus.

And ye may see likewise in these Words, the way that Paul took to overcome his Lusts, he was much in the exercise of Prayer: for the Words that we have read are indeed a short and pathetick Prayer. I conceive that Word which is recorded in Isa. 38. 14. *O Lord, I am Oppressed, undertake for me*, is a sweet Paraphrase upon these Words.

Fourthly, You may see his great and principal Suit to have been *Deliverance from this body of Death*: that captive exile was hasting to be delivered, and looking out at the Windows of his Prison-house, waiting till the Jailor should come and open the Doors, and take his Chains and Fetters from off his Feet: We confess these shall not be fully taken off, till we shall be passing thorough the Door of our everlasting Rest, and then that woful and sad Complaint shall take his everlasting Adieu and Farewel; For if we may speak so, the Burial-place of Sin is before the Door of our eternal Rest, it then ceaseth to be, when we begin more eminently to have a Being: But may we not be ashamed, and blush, that we are not more in uttering those inexpressible sighs and groans of the spirit, under the Conviction of our sinfulness, since this holy Man, who had, no doubt, attained unto a great length in Mortification, who had plucked out many right Eyes, and cut off many right Hands, and oft-times returned Victor after War, was so much in groaning under his Corruption. O! but we have inverted strangely the way to Heaven! I conceive practical Antinomianism is an epidemick Error in these Days: Many think that it is below a regenerate Man to mourn, and to sit down and lament over the Body of Death; we know not what it is to make our Bed to swim with Tears, and to be bedewing the way to Zion, when our Faces are thitherward; ye conceive that it is a Lesson to be practised, and learned by those in a low-

er Class, and those who are learning (so to speak) the Rudiments of Christianity, and not to be exercised by those, who are now advanced unto the high Class of Christianity, that being (as it were in our Apprehension) a degrading of your selves from that Pitch of Perfection, unto which in your Imagination you have attained: but, believe me, it is a Work not below the eldest Christian, nor above the youngest Believer; and the more one be old in Reality in Religion, this Work will always be new in their practice. I shall only give you that divine Counsel of a holy Man, who desired Christians to set about the Mortification of their Lusts, as though they had never been taken up in that Duty before, each day (to set about to mortifie, not as a Proficient, but as a Beginner, who hath never made any Progress in that blessed Work.

Now in speaking upon *Pauls* exercise, which is here holden forth, that he was continually exercised in Wrestling against those Corruptions, and that body of Death that was in Him: We need not stand long to prove that it is the Duty of a Christian to be so exercised and taken up; there is somewhat of that implied in that Word, *Acts* 24. 16. And it is more clearly pressed, *Col.* 3. 5. *Eph.* 6. 13, and *1 Cor.* 5. 7. And, No doubt, if a Christian did reflect more upon the Nature of Sin, and consider that by it, Deformity with God is increased, and precious Conformity with him lost; and, did we take up Sin in its woful Effects, that it worketh Death, and involveth us under the curse of a living God, we would be more constant in this Spiritual Warfare. O! but Christians, thorough Want of the Apprehension of these, are much disabled to stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and oft-times entangled themselves again with the yoke of bondage: So that I conceive, if God were coming to give a name to the Christians of this Generation, he might call us *Issachar*, because we do now crouch down under

der two burdens and are become Servants unto Tribute; and even those that are more refined and tender in their walk in those Days, he might call them *Reuben*, because they are unstable as water, which marreth their excellency.

But that which first we shall speak to, is how the wrestlings of a natural Man against the Body of Death, and those Corruptions that are within him, may be distinguished from the wrestlings of one that is really godly.

And first we conceive, that it is without debate and controversie, that a Man altogether unregenerate, by natures light may be put on to mortifie (if so we may speak) and contradict those Sins, which are most sensual and gross; natures light including an Antipathy and Detestation of those things within it self, though we confess, therow the depravement of our Nature, those Sins, which fall under the Sphere of Nature's Mortification, are now abridged unto a small sum, it being not now refined and clear, as it was, when Man was in the estate of Innocence.

Secondly, Another sort may, from some common Qualification oppose some Sins, as those that are of more heroick and refined Spirits, will have a Detestation against covetousness, and other Sins of that nature, and so in some sense may endeavour the Mortification of these things.

Thirdly, The same may a natural Man do by such a Conviction of the Holy Ghost, as is but a common Work of the Spirit, he may be put on to mortifie these Sins that are more visible, and some what gross in their nature, as is clear from the Practice of those who cleanse the Outside of the Platter, and studie to have an outward conformity unto the Law of God, notwithstanding of that inward and secret antipathy against the Strictness of his Law; yea more, a natural Man who hath some predominant evil, may endeavour, and will

will attempt to wrestle against that sin, which is in a direct Line of Opposition against it; as one that is given to the vice of covetousness, he will study to mortifie that vice of Prodigality, those being two opposite vices. Now from all these we may conclude, that upon every Opposition which we use against our corruptions, it is not safe to infer, That we are really engaged in this Spiritual Warfare; it being, we think another thing, than the most part of us do imagine it to be: And we do confess, it is a difficulty, even to attain that length of endeavour in Mortification, which the natural Man by these things which we have spoken may attain to, but for the Difference betwixt their Debates, the first is this, that a natural and unregenerate Man, doth mainly wrestle against these sins, that are outward and more gross, and not so much against those Sins, that are inward, and fall not under the Eye of Man: We do not deny, but a natural Man may wrestle against vain Thoughts, & have some small Opposition against the stirring of Corruption within his own Bosom, but we conceive, that there are these two secret Sins, which a natural Man is not at all taken up in wrestling against, at least very little, viz. his original Corruption, and his Unbelief: Whereas one that is really godly, is much taken up in bearing down these. *Paul* is here taken up in wrestling against his original Sin: And *David*, *Psal* 51. 5. compared with *verses* 2. and 7. is likewise taken up in wrestling against it; and that good Man, that is recorded in the Gospel, who cryed forth, *Lord I believe, help my unbelief*, was much taken up in wrestling against his unbelief; and *David*, *Psa* 77. from the beginning to the 10. verse, and forward: And certainly, one that ever was taken up in wrestling against these two (at least in some small Measure and Degree) he may hesitate much whether or not he was ever seriously engaged in this holy Warfare. O! but if many that pass under the notion

of Professors were posed, when they did enter into the Lists with original Corruption, there are many, who without Breach of Truth, might say, They never knew what it was to contend against it: And this certainly speaks forth much of our Ignorance of original Guilt; and believe me, there is more Deformity unto the Image of God in original Sin, than in a Thousand actual Out-breakings: And it is but in vain for a Christian to attempt the Mortification and cutting off of Branches, till once he study to pluck up the Root, which doth bear *Wormwood and Gall*.

A second Difference is this, A natural Man wrestleth against his Corruptions, rather because they bring him under the Stroke of the Justice of God, than because they are contrary to the Holiness of God: Hence is it that the most Part of a natural Man's wrestling is, when he is under Affliction; somewhat of which is pointed out, *Psal. 78. 34, 35*. Now this Difference is clear in *Joseph* and *Paul*, who made the Holiness of God the great Topick, and common Place, whence they did produce all their Arguments for contradicting Sin, as *Paul* in this Chapter, and *Joseph* in that precious Sentence, *Shall I do this, and sin against God?* But *Cain*, who was a Man cut off from the right Hand of the Lord, had another Principle of contradicting and wrestling against his Lusts, *My Punishment is greater than I can bear*, *Gen. 4. 13*. And hence it is that a natural Man doth never oppose Sin, as it is a Cause to interrupt Fellowship and Communion with God, or from that divine Principle of Christ's Love constraining him: O! but the Principle of a natural Man wrestling against Corruption, be selfish and low! And if there were not a Hell, and a Place of Torment, natural Men would take a Latitude to themselves not to mortifie Sin. But sure it argueth a divine and heroick Spirit, and plausible to them who have Christ in them their Hope of Glory; that though there were neither any Regard or Remuneration

ration of their Obedience, neither any Punishment of their Disobedience, yet simple desire to please God, and not to profane his Holiness which he loveth, doth ty them to Obedience. I may confidently say, That these who never knew what it was to have that three-fold cord, and that Precious triple chain, binding them to Obedience, and inducing them to mortifie their Lusts, to Wit, *the holiness of God, the fear to interrupt Communion and fellowship with him, and the love of Christ*, they may question whether or not, ever they were seriously engaged in this holy Warfare: But withall we do not deny, but the Fear of Punishment is likewise a most divine Principle of Mortification in its own Place; but except there be some what higher, it is not to build upon.

The third Difference is this, That a natural man studieth more to restrain Sin, than to mortifie it, for he is a man that resteth satisfied with the Restraint of the Actings of Sin, though there be no Mortification of that vitious Inclination, which is in the Man: this is clear in *Haman*, *Esth.* 3. 5. in *Saul*, *1 Sam* 24. 16. 17. and following verses, compared with *1 Sam.* 26. 2. and the Scribes and Pharisees *Mat.* 23. 25. But the Mortification that the Heart requireth, is of a higher nature, *Gal.* 5. 24. where we are commanded to *crucifie the flesh with the Affections and Lusts*; not only to restrain the Acts, but to mortifie the habits: We confess it is a Difficulty to determine the difference berwixt the the Restraint of Sin, and mortifying of Sin; and this maketh it the more difficult, that sins which are really mortified, sometimes a Christian may be overtaken to commit, which I conceive seldom or never holds of Sins that are more gross, but holds oft-times of Sins that are of a lower Nature and Degree. Yet these things may a little point forth the difference. First, a Christian who hath Sin mortified, is filled with much divine Joy and Satisfaction in the mortifying of it, which we conceive

conceive, partly doth proceed from this, that a Christian, when he is honoured to mortifie a Lust, he ordinarily then receives the Intimation of his Peace and interest in God, in a more lively and Spiritual way. And, Secondly, because at that time also he doth receive much precious and sweet Communion with God, his Soul then is in life, somewhat of this is pointed out to us, *Rom. 8. 13.* and *Rom. 7. 24.* compared with verse 25. Thirdly, The difference may be known by this, that when a Man hath been much in the exercise of fasting and prayer for the mortifying of such a Lust and Idol, & hath not attained to this with great facility, there is great appearance that upon the desisting of tentation, and the actings of his Spirit to commit such a thing, such a Lust is mortified, and not restrained only; there is somewhat of this pointed forth, *Matth. 17. 20, 21:* where it is said, That the power of casting out of Devils goeth not forth but by Fasting and Prayer. We conceive the place is principally to be understood concerning the faith of miracles, though by Proportion and Analogy it may hold of sanctifying faith. O! our Lusts in these days do rather go out, than are cast out; they rather die to us than we to them. Fourthly, The Frame of Spirit, which we have after mortifying of a Lust, may let us see whether it be a real Work, or only some Restraint for a Time: A Man that doth attain such a Length, as really to mortifie and crucifie any Lust, is much taken up in the Exercise of Praise, *Rom. 7. 25.* & *Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57.* he is under Conviction of his Duty to bless the Lord, though he is also convinced of an Impossibility of Blessing him as he ought to be: But we think, when Lusts are restrained only, and not mortified, the Man is not so much taken up in the Exercise of Praise. O! what heavenly Elogies and Songs of praise have the Saints penned unto the unsearchable and omnipotent Grace of Christ, when they have been enabled to overcome and

nd crucifie a Lust, Their Souls have been inditing a good
atter concerning the praises of the King, their Tongue hath
en as the Pen of a Ready Writer. And this may lastly point
ut the Difference; Sins that are mortified, do not for
e most part presently recur so, as to obtain Victory
ver the Christian; we confess, Satan to weaken our
onfidence, may assault us with Tentations to commit
at Iniquity, that so we may be brought to call in
uestion our real and spiritual Victory over it: But if
lusts be only restrained, it cannot be long away from
obtaining Victory: This is clear from *Eph.* 4. 10. com-
ared with the following verses; as likewise from *1*
Sam. 24. 16, 17. &c. compared with *1 Sam.* 26. 2.

The fourth Difference, a natural Man is not con-
stant in his wrestling against his Corruptions, but takes
by fits and starts, either when he is under Affliction,
or some other sad Occurrence that doth befall him,
or though some sharp and sudden Conviction of a com-
monly enlightened Conscience; but he that is really
taken up in this spiritual Warfare, hath a constancy in
maintaining of it, at least in his Endeavours: this is
clear from *Acts* 24. 16. and *Col.* 3. 5. and indeed that
woful Inconstancy that we have in this spiritual War-
fare, doth evidence our little real Engagement in the
Work. Are there not many here who can interrupt the
Warfare many Weeks, & yet not be much under either
the discovery of their loss, or under any Impression of
sorrow, because of it? Sure, if this were believed, that
there may be more lost in one day, than can
be gained in many, we would endeavour to be more
constant. O! but Grace is a tender Thing, and we
ought to keep it as the apple of our Eye. Alas, there are
out too many, who slacken their Endeavour against
sin, and will ly idle many days, and yet are ready to
think, that when they please, they can shake them-
selves of their Lusts, as at other Times; but to these
we shall only say this, Beware, lest that Dispensation
once

once meet you, that when ye shall begin to shake yourselves of your Lusts, and of your Bands, your Strength shall be gone from you, and then your Enemies shall lead you captive, and put out your two Eyes. O! be sometimes our Corruptions get such Advantage over us, that we may say: *Video meliora proboque, deterius sequor.*

The fifth difference, They go not about this Warfare from a right Principle, which the Christian doth: the one wrestles in their own Strength, but the other resting upon the Strength of *Jehovah* *his everlasting Strength*; this is pointed at, *Rom. 8. 13.* there is a Command, that a wrestling Christian studies always to obey: a Christian uses much that precious Divinity of *David* *1 Sam. 17. 45. 46.* when they go to War. And alas, there are many that are living under the Apprehension of Warfare, who, in the Day of their Accounts, we fear, shall be found never really to have entered in the Lists with *Principalities and Powers*, and *Spiritual Wickedness*. And it is no wonder that many of us be foiled by the Hand of our Iniquities, we not having sitted down first when we engaged to consider whether we, with our ten Thousand, were able to meet him that came against us with his twenty Thousand: we engaged without the Apprehension of Difficulty, and so no wonder we be overcome without much Difficulty. Now examine your selves by these, whether indeed you be engaged in this Spiritual Warfare,

Now, that which, Secondly we shall speak to, shall be, to those Advantages that a Christian may have by being continually taken up in the Spiritual Warfare. The first Advantage is this, it is an excellent Way to obtain Victory over these Lusts and Idols, wherewith we are beset: We conceive it is no Wonder that this be the great and general Complaint of Christians in those Days, that they are led captive by the Hand of their Iniquities, and that the Voice and Noise of the Spoiled

spoiler is so much heard with them, because they are not taken up in a constant debating and contending with Sin; there is somewhat of this pointed out to us, *Rev. 3. 5.* where though that Promise be principally understood of the Reward of an Overcomer, when he shall be above, that *he shall be clothed in White*, yet we think it may include this, That a Man that is in the Way, and constant Exercise of overcoming, shall attain to much divine Conformity with God, and much divine Deformity with the World: And to those who are much discouraged with their little Success and apparent Victory in this War, notwithstanding of their Constancy in Debate with their Lusts, we shall only speak that for their Comfort by way of Allusion, which is, *Dan. 7. 12.* *Their Dominion shall be taken from them, but their Lives be prolonged for a Season and Time.* The Dominion of your Lusts shall be taken away, though their Lives may be prolonged for your Exercise and Dependence on him for a short Time and Season. Ye may have Tribulation in this Spiritual Warfare ten Days; but be convinced of this, that the Day is coming, when ye shall sit down upon a Throne, after ye have overcome, as Christ also did sit down, after he had overcome; Once ye shall stand and defend the Field, when all your Lusts shall flee as Chaff before the Wind; albeit oft-times our Discouragement speaks that Word which Saul spake to David, *1 Sam. 17. 33.* (when we are to wrestle with the Devil) *Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a Youth, and he a Man of War from his Youth:* Yet a Christian ought to answer, *Through God I shall do valiantly.*

Secondly, It is the Way to attain much divine Consolation, as is clear, *Rev. 2. 17.* *To him that overcometh, will I give to eat the hidden Manna, which is (as we conceive) in Part he shall have of the Consolations of the holy Ghost, though it be principally understood of Jesus Christ.* O! what divine Contentment, and unspeakable

speakeable Solace of Mind doth a Christian attain by entertaining a constant Enmity against his Lusts. I am perswaded, that which doth interrupt a Christian's Peace much, is the Interruption of that holy and divine Enmity which we ought to have against Sin. I believe me, there is more real Satisfaction to be found in one Day's serious Debate against Sin, than in having an Eternity of Enjoyment of the most flourishing Pleasures in the World: *Ye may sow in Tears in this Warfare, but ye shall only reap in Joy*: The first Part may be true of the Men of the World; in their Pursuit after their Pleasures, they do sow in Tears, but it was never yet heard nor left upon Record, that they did reap in Joy: There was always a Correspondence betwixt their Seed-time and their Harvest; but there is a divine Transmutation and Disproportion betwixt the Seed-time of a Christian and his Harvest, unspeakable Joy can spring off the Root of their most bitter Sorrows.

Thirdly, It is an excellent Way to maintain the Faith of our Interest in God; this is clear from *Rev. 2* 17 where Christ giveth this Promise to the overcomer, that he will give them *a new Name*, which holdeth forth their Adoption and Interest in him, which no Man can know, but he that receiveth it; and certainly there is nothing that over-clouds a Christian's Hope so much, nor darkneth his interest, as an Intermision in this holy Warfare. Yea more particularly he attained to the most certain Perswasion of his Victory over his Corruptions: there is somewhat of this pointed out *2 Tim. 7. 8. I have fought the good fight of faith*, and hence he doth infer, that there is laid up for him *a Crown of righteousness*, which doth certainly import and conclude in its bosom, that Paul upon his constant endeavour to wrestle against Corruption, did attain to much certainty of overcoming. I think it altogether impossible for a Christian, intermitting this holy Warfare

to intertain any divine or assured Perswasion, that there is a blessed issue and period unto his Warfare. And we think it is from this, that oftentimes his own cry out, *Who can stand before the children of Anak*, and do conclude to make to themselves a Captain, & go back unto Egypt: Though we think, that if we were constant in this, we would be taught, not only to intertain a holy undervaluing of them, but likewise a divine certainty of overcoming. I think a Christian hath not only that advantage by being constant in this Warfare, that he is brought to an assured Perswasion that he shall overcome, but likewise doth most sweetly conclude, that the strength of their Corruption is gone, therefore they may go up and war with them.

Fourthly, By maintaining this Warfare, a Christian gets much experience; by it he attains to much distinct Apprehension of the deceitfulness of him, who is *the deceiver of the brethren*, we are perswaded, that these who are constant in this Warfare, can speak most to those singular subtilities of Satan, and can most distinctly fathom these deep devices of his; as likewise, they can most take up the unsearchable deceitfulness of their own Heart: And there is, no doubt, no small advantage in the taking up of these two, both that we may be provoked unto self-diffidence; as likewise to have our confidence and hope much reposed upon *Jesus Christ*, who is *the Captain of our Salvation*, that we may be constrained in that day, when the blast of the terrible one, is as a blast against the wall, and when the archer doth shoot at us, and grievously wound us, to go unto him, whose Name is *an everlasting strength*, that so by his strength we may be enabled to overcome.

That which thirdly we shall speak to, shall be, what is the reason Christians do obtain so small Victory in this Spiritual Warfare: And in this, we shall not only speak to these moral and culpable causes, why Christians

rians do not obtain much victory, but we shall likewise speak a little to these divine and precious ends that God hath in denying victory to his own, who, in some small Measure, are entertaining a constant Enmity against their corruption. And as for the first, it doth proceed from too much self conceit and presumptuous Opinion of their own strength: I am persuaded, that that which made *Peter* so incapable to resist the temptations of denying *Christ*, did much proceed from that word which is, *Mat. 26. 33. Though all men should be offended because of him, yet he would never be offended.* Therefore we think, that the first and most excellent Way to obtain Victory, is to be dwelling under the Apprehensions of our own Weakness to overcome, that holy & divine Paradox being always made true, That *when we are weak, then are we strong*, and we may enter the Lists with our Corruptions, having no Confidence in the Flesh, but desiring in the Name of the *God of Israel* to wrestle with the Strongest *Goliath* that we meet with. O! but Humility is a most sweet and strong Armour, wherewith a Christian ought to be clothed, when he goeth to war: he must walk in that holy Fear which may be consistent with Faith, and entertain so much Faith, and spiritual Confidence, as may not altogether cut off holy Fear.

There is a second Cause, which is too much Intanglement with the Pleasures and Affairs of the World: It is impossible for one who is taken up in the continual Noise and Buz of things here below to be an Overcomer, hence *Paul* presseth, *2 Tim. 2. 4. that no man that warreth ought to intangle himself with the Affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a Souldier*; and that Word, *1 Cor. 9. 25. He that striveth for the mastery must be temperate in all things*; O! oftentimes through the Deceitfulness of the World, and Pleasures thereof, we are led captive by the Hand of our Iniquities, and do fall before our Enemies. I know
nothing

nothing so suitable and helpful for a Christian to overcome, than to be denyed to these three cardinal and fundamental Temptations, by which Satan standeth to allure us, which are *the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life*; that our Eyes may not take in any sweet or pleasant Representations of the transient Vanities of the World, neither may our sensual appetite be taken with the Taste of these bitter and most soure Delights, neither may be ambitious in the Enjoyments and actual Possession of them.

There is a third Cause, which is, That we are not taken up in the exercise of watchfulness. This is certain, that the exercise of this Grace, hath most divine Influence for the overcoming of our Corruptions, as is clear from *Matth. 26. 41.* and *Mark 14. 38.* That ought to be the great Motto of a Christian Souldier, which ought to be engraven upon his Arms, *Watch.* Watchfulness is not only effectual for overcoming in this respect, that it doth discover unto us our Temptations, when they begin to assail us, but likewise it takes up both the subtilty and strength of our Temptations, as likewise it taketh up the Weakness and Inability in the Christian to resist that Temptation; and if those three be attained, seldom or never is a Christian much foiled by the Hand of his Iniquities, therefore that which I would say to the Christian Souldier, I would say unto all, *Watch.*

There is a fourth Cause, which is, That we are not much taken up in the Exercise of secret Prayer; Prayer being indeed that noble and spiritual Weapon by which Christians do overcome, as is clear from *Matth. 26. 41.* and *2 Cor. 12. 7.* where *Paul*, when a Messenger of Satan buffeted him, was constrained to beseech the Lord for grace, a practice much unknown by the most of Christians, who know not what it is to pray without ceasing, when they are tempted much without Interruption. I think of all the Weapons that almost a Christian tak-

eth to resist Temptation, this is most effectual; for when *Satan* seeth that a Christian improves the Temptation so much for his own Advantage, as to make it an errand to go to God, then he desists and gives over to contend. I confess, a Christian may in so far glory in his Infirmities, as they give him an occasion to converse more frequently with God. O! but had we spent more of our Time in conversing with God, when we were alone, we might have attained many sweet trophies, and fruits of our Victory, which now we have only in Hope and Expectation.

There is a fifth Cause, which is, That we are not much taken up in the Exercise of Faith, which is that general piece of armour that *Paul* doth prescribe unto the Christian, *Eph. 6. 16. Above all Things taking the shield of Faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*: There is that sweet note of Commendation put upon this Armour, That there is no Temptation a Christian can meet with, but through the Exercise of Faith, he may be able to overcome it: Hence *Paul* saith, Ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the Devil: This piece of Armour is not only defensive, but we may say, in some Measure, it is offensive likewise: Now Faith helps a Christian to overcome his Temptations and Corruptions, wherewith he is assaulted, not only by laying hold on the infinite strength of him who is the Captain of Salvation, but likewise, Faith is that Grace which hath the most subtile and divine Eye in taking up the strength of Corruption: O! but a Man much in the Exercise of Faith, is a Man that can pass a most accurate sentence upon his Lusts and Idols, wherewith he doth rencounter: There is nothing impossible to the believing Man: And I think, if there be any Grace by which a Christian doth ascend most to a divine similitude unto the Omnipotency of God, it is by the Grace of Faith

Hereby

Hereby is the Christians Power most intended. O! but Faith will make those that are weak, strong: Therefore we would desire you to be exercising your confidence upon him, who is that *Munition of rocks*, so that through him, ye may overcome, as likewise through the Word of your Testimony.

This lastly may be a cause, That after some small Victory over our Lusts, we are ordinarily entangled with security, not knowing what it is to make the Victory over one Lust, a sweet Provocation to the overcoming of another. I think (if we may allude unto that Word which is, *Psal. 18. 37.*) it ought much to be the Practice of a Christian, to *Pursue his enemies till he overtake them, and never to return again till they be consumed*, that by the Strength of him who is *Jehovah*, we may *run thorow a Troop*, and by our God we may *leap over a wall*. O! but constant Exercise in this War, never proclaiming a Cessation of Arms, would make a speedy riddance of all our adversaries; he then *should teach our Hands to War*, and by our Arms a bow of steel might be broken. I think that which made David so little Successful over his Lusts after some small Victory, was his security; as likewise in Peter. There is no Discharge in this War till Death, and then we shall receive our everlasting Arrears for all our Toil.

Now to the second, Those divine ends that the Lord hath in this, why Christians do not attain Victory over their Lusts, though in some small measure endeavouring constancy in War; it doth either proceed from this, That God knows that we can better improve a wrestling Estate than an overcoming estate; while we are here below, we can better dispense with War, than we can with Victory. Therefore, while we are travelling thorow this Wilderness, he doth still keep us in Exercise with Serpents and Scorpions: Or it doth much proceed from this, that we may be kept in a constant Dependence upon God; and may en-

certain a holy and constant correspondence with him. It is certain, That if we were not constrained to walk with God, through a principle of necessity, seldom we would walk with him through a principle of duty, or from a principle of love; for it is obvious to a Christian upon his secret search, that we walk most with God, when we stand most in need of him. It doth likewise proceed from this, that we may be kept humble while we are here below, and that we may not be exalted above Measure; As also, that the Grace and Power of our blessed Lord Jesus, in helping us to overcome, may be rendered more conspicuous and evident; this being the great Stage in which Christ's Power doth most eminently act and appear over our Weakness, and the Apprehensions of these insuperable difficulties, wherewith we are beset, and oft overcome.

Now to shut up our Discourse, we shall desire, that once ye may give up your Names unto Jesus Christ, to fight under his Royal Banner: And believe Me, though your Corruptions were never so strong, yet at last he shall overcome them; the certainty whereof is made out unto you by this, that your blessed head, hath led Captivity Captive, and is now exalted at the right Hand of the Majesty on high; and the Hope and Expectation of that blessed Issue may make you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of Glory.

S E R M O N II.

Gal. 5. 24. *And they that are Christs have crucified the Flesh with the affections and Lusts.*

O! When shall that great and excellent Wonder be seen in Heaven, which John did see, Rev. 12. 16, 17. To behold the Visible Church, and those that

that are Expectants of Heaven, which is that Woman clothed and adorned with that spotless and beautiful Righteousness of a crucified Saviour, which is pointed out, by her being clothed with the Sun, and to be regulate by the Doctrine of the twelve Apostles, which are indeed those precious Stars that will bring us unto the Place where *Christ* lies, and will sweetly conduct us unto him; And withall, to have that great Idol under our feet, *the World*, the divine Emblem of which is the Moon, because it is subject to many Vicissitudes and Changes, and hath most different and contrary aspects: Though we conceive, that if many Christians were to be painted, we might fix the Moon upon their Head, for they use not the World as their Servant, but as their Master; Mortification, is an Exercise that doth not suit with Flesh and Blood: It is a hard saying to a Man settled upon the Drags of nature, and yet incorporate in that old Stock. O! But it is sad Divinity to many, that except one die with *Christ*, they cannot reign with him; we most wint to the Fellowship of his Sufferings, and be comfortable unto his Death, before we attain to the Resurrection from the Dead: We love to divide those things that God hath conjoynd, to take *Christ* for Righteousness and Salvation, but not for a King, and for Sanctification. And if it was an evidence unto wise *Solomon*, that she was not the Mother of the Child, who was pleaded for the Division of it, so it may be supposed, that he who will not take whole *Christ*, but would have him divided, is not one that is predestinated to the Adoption of Children. We confess, there are many that love Christs coat, rather than his Graces, and if they pursue after those, it is more after those Graces, that are adorning than saving. And we conceive that there are these three Graces, that a hypocrite doth most pursue after; There is the Grace of Prayer, and the Grace of knowledge, and the Grace of humility; and of the last we may say, A hy-

hypocrite may endeavour to personate it, but there is
 always within his Bosom some Convictions of his lit-
 tle attainment, it is impossible for a hypocrite to think
 himself nothing, and, O! that we could once attain
 to that precious length of Christianity, as to be enter-
 taining a holy Oblivion of our attainments, and a sanc-
 tified memory of our Imperfections; that the former
 may be written, as it were in the sand, and the latter
 might be engraven in the fleshy Tables of our Hearts,
 and kept constantly upon record: We confess there is
 not much of our leaf that withers in these Days, but
 much of our fruit withers and decays. O! is not
 Man become so brutish and ignorant, that he may
 be sent unto the beasts of the Field, to be instructed of
 that which is his duty: *Solomon* makes Mention of
 four Beasts upon the Earth, which are little and ex-
 ceeding wise, *Prov.* 30. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, all which may
 teach us some spiritual Doctrine, *First*, There are the
 Ants, who may teach us that Grace of divine providence,
 and Christian Policy, in laying hold on our Occasions
 and Opportunities, who, though they be not strong
 people, yet provide their meat in summer; and no
 doubt, we should be fighting with our spiritual ene-
 mies, while it is the Day, for the Night cometh where-
 in no Man can fight: Actions done in Season add a
 great deal of lustre and perfection to them, every
 Thing being beautiful in its Season. *Secondly*, There
 are the conies, who may teach us that Grace of denial,
 to distrust our own Strength; in the Day of straits, to
 run unto him who is that *Mountain of Rocks*, when the
 blast of the terrible One, is as a storm against a wall;
 for they being a feeble people, make their Houses in
 the Rocks; And no doubt, Atheism and Idolatry
 are the two great impediments of Mortification, too
 much confidence in our selves, which is Idolatry,
 and too much diffidence in God, which is our Athe-
 ism. Moreover, we may go to the Locusts, which would
 teach

teach us that primitive Grace of Unity; who though they want a King, yet go they forth by bands: And, *Lastly*, We may go to the spider, which may teach us that Grace of spiritual Mindedness, and of aspiring after those sublime and excellent Things of God, for they are in Kings Palaces: And O! to be more conversant with Heaven, and those Things that are above: This would make us to distaste these lower Springs, and they would be to us as the Waters of *Marah*.

But, to come more particularly to the Words, you have many precious Things concerning Mortification holden forth, which is that precious and cardinal Grace of which we intend at this Time to speak; you have the infinite advantage of this Grace held forth, to wit, that such do meet with divine Intimation of their interest in Christ, and that they are Christs, which is indeed the high Elevation of a Christian: And this is clear from the Words, that such an one may from this gather, that his Name was written in the ancient and precious Records of Heaven: And, no doubt, little divine wrestling with our Corruptions, makes us to have the Extract of our Peace so often withdrawn to our Sense: There is this held forth concerning it, the extensive nature of Mortification, that a Christian ought not only to mortifie the Flesh, which is original Sin, which is so called, not only because of that woful knot of Amity and Affection that is betwixt us and our Lusts; hence that Word, *no Man ever hated his own Flesh*. O! those invisible knots of Union that are betwixt us and our Lusts; but it is so called, because Sin hath contaminate the whole Man, so that *from the Crown of the Head to the Sole of the Foot*, there is nothing that is not defiled; as likewise, because during our abode in those tents of Mortality; we must have this woful and sad Companion, and there is an unchangeable and unalterable decree of Heaven, that during our Time of Minority, we should have that

bad associate; but more a Christian should mortifie his Affections, which are his predominant Lusts, to which our Affections are so much joined, and our soul doth so much go out after; as also his Lusts, which are the first Motions and risings of Corruption within one, and withall may comprehend the eschewing the first shadows and appearances of evil, *Prov. 4. 14, 15. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil Men, avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away*: Our Mortifications should be as much of our invisible Idols, as our visible Lusts.

There is this likewise held forth, the difficulty and painfulness of this Work under this notion of crucifying, which was one of the most painful Deaths. We conceive, that there are many who are of that Mans Humour, who wallowing upon the Grass, cryed forth, *Utinam hoc esset laborare*: There is, no doubt, more difficulty in this than we apprehend; we must not be in the Bed of ease, if we intend to be mortifying Christians; we must wrestle as Princes with God, till we prevail. The Longsomness of this Work is also pointed at, under the notion of Crucifying, it being a longsom Death: We cannot ordinarily fight and triumph in one Day; that Ambitious letter of *Cesars* will not hold here, *Veni, Vidi, Vici*, we must die mortifying and struggling with our Corruptions, and when one of our Feet is within the borders of Eternity to be fighting out that Lamentation, *O wretched Man that I am*, &c. You have also the intensive nature of Mortification, that a Christian should be content with nothing but the Death of his Lusts, which is held forth in that Word, *Crucifixe*. O! to bind our selves with a holy Oath and Vow, not to dwell in much contentment, till we have gotten the life of our predominant Lust: We must not give our Idol quarter, upon the most plausible and fairest Terms of Subjection, otherwise, if ye do, I shall not say that Word which the Prophet

spake

spake to *Ahab*. That your *life shall go for his* ; but sure I am, that Confederacy shall be broken, and likely not without many sorrows to your Spirits. There is lastly, the certainty of this Victory held forth in that Word, *They have crucified* ; it's here in the Preterit Time, as it were already accomplished and brought to pass ; and no doubt, this may make us to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of Glory, that once we shall have a triumphant Song put in our Mouth.

Now before we shall speak unto any of these, we shall speak to some few Things as previous to be known. We shall not dwell long in pointing out the Nature of Mortification ; we conceive it thus, It is a divine quality of the immortal Soul, deriyed form the efficacy and virtue of *Christs* Death, whereby the strength of Sin is impaired, and its Dominion taken away, so that we should not totally, nor with full consent yield our selves unto that Iron-yoke of our Iniquity; neither shall we stand long to prove that it is your Duty to be much in the practice of this Duty : It is clear not only from *Col. 3. 5. Mortifie therefore your Members which are upon the Earth*, but also from *1 Pet. 2. 15, 16.* and *2 Cor. 7. 1.* It ought to be our great design and aim to bring all those Things in Subjection, which stand in Opposition to *Jesus Christ*, and it is the noble Prerogative of those young Men, *1 Job 2. 13, 14.* that they have overcome that wicked one, and hath in some Measure trodden Satan under their feet.

But we shall speak a little unto this, *First*, Whether or not a Christian can fall again to the committing of that Sin which once they have mortified, and repented for, and withall hath received an act of Pardon ? We conceive indeed (so far as we know) there can be no explicit proof given of such a case in Scripture, that ever any of those that were heirs of the Grace of Life, did fall into that Sin which they had once mortified, and repented for; But however, we are confident

to aver, that it is not inconsistent with a gracious estate, which we conceive is clear, not only from his names, but from his promises, and from his Commands: Doth not that Name, that he is a *healer of our backslidings*, and a *repairer of our Breaches*, and that Name, *he will multiply to pardon*, speak out that of a Saints relapsing into a mortified Sin, doth not put him without hope, *Isa. 55. 7. Hos. 14. 4.* but that he may have confidence that he shall not die but live, and declare the wondrous works of the Lord, though God may speak that word to him, which *Abraham* spake to *Hushai*, *Is this thy Kindness to thy Friend?* And withall, do not his promises speak this, *Jer. 3. 22. I will heal your backslidings*; and do not his Commands speak it, *Jer. 3. 1, 12, 14, 22.* how often is backsliding. *Israel* exhorted to return, and he who imposed that commandment upon us, to forgive our brother until seventy and seven Times, if he return and repent, will not his bowels be moved within him, towards a backsliding heifer? But withall, to provoke you to beware of that Sin, to sin after repentance and Mortification, we shall propose these Things, *First*, Such a Sin doth create and beget much Hardness and Stupidity of Heart, so that *our own backslidings* do reprove us, and become not only our Sin, but our Punishment: And when God hath spoken Peace to us, should we again turn to Folly? Secondly, There is this to dissuade you, That such Apostasy as this, makes a Christian to lose the sense and comfortable assurance of their Interest, so that sometimes they will be even razing, as it were, the foundations: O! but backsliders in Heart are filled with the Fruit of their own Way, and are made to walk in *Darkness*, and to have *no Light*: It is much for a Christian to keep fast his Hands, when after this Manner, he hath lost his Feet.

Fourthly, Such an one doth not ordinarily give much reins, and much Liberty to his Corruptions; that

is indeed their Year of Jubilee and Release, as is clear from Jer. 5. 6. where these two are joined: And may not the Nature and aggravating circumstances of that Sin make you to eschew it? Is it not a sinning against Light? Is it not a sinning against God, after he hath appeared unto you twice? So that this may be the Manner of your bemoaning your self. If it had been an Enemy that had thus done, O Lord, thou mightest have born it; but that it should be one, whom thou didst condescend to make thy Familiar, and to take sweet Counsel together with him, that hath lift up his Heel against thee; this no doubt, is an Iniquity of a deep dye; and we shall only say this, That it is an imprinted upon the Effigie of godly Judah; Gen. 36. 26, That after his first fall with Tamar, he knew her again no more. And, no doubt, it were your advantage to obey that Counsel, let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.

Now, that which *Secondly*, We would speak to, is to propose some Thing to you, by which you may know your growth in Mortification, since there are many that delude themselves in this, supposing that their lusts are really mortified, when they are but sleeping, and that they are really cast out, when they only go out for a Season; those are they that are pure in their own Eyes, and yet are not cleansed from their Iniquity. And before we shall speak any Thing to this, we would have you considering these Things, *First*, That there may be a growth of Leaves, where there is not much growth of Fruit, a plentiful Measure of Profession, and yet much barrenness in practice: There are some whose leaf doth not wither, though their Fruit doth much decay, who have many specious appearances, and yet cannot say that the Root of the Matter is with them, and wish all we would say, That there may be some real growth to the Fruit, when there is not much in the Root, so that though we spread forth our Branches, yet we do not

not cast forth our root as *Lebanon*; we grow sometimes more in Prayer, and Knowledge, and Joy in the *Holy Ghost*, than in mortification and humility, though there be a Promise for both their Growths, *Hos.* 14. 5, 6. Now there is in this, *Secondly*, That we would have you knowing, that there is a divine necessity for Christians to grow somewhat in all the Graces of the Spirit, and to bring forth Fruit even in old Age, to be advancing in Mortification, to be ascending up in a divine conformity with God, till we shall be made like unto him: We confess indeed, there are some sad interruptions, when we almost forget that we were purged from our old Sins; and this necessity of growth, appears not only from this, that *Christ* is the head of believers, and they his Members; this similitude the Apostle useth twice to express a Christians growth, *Eph.* 4. 15, 16. *Col.* 2. 10. And, no doubt, since *Christ* is the head, and we the Members, we must grow till there be a divine conformity and resemblance betwixt us and our head; and are not we predestinate unto this divine and noble End, *Rom.* 8. 29. and must not we purifie our selves, and endeavour to wash our selves from our spots, through that precious Blood of sprinkling that *we may be holy, as he who hath called us, is holy*. And more, this is one End of that fulness, which was communicate unto *Jesus Christ* our precious Head, ever to make us compleat, *Col.* 2. 9, 10. And as his fulness is for our growth, so our growth is for the making up of his fulness, *Eph.* 1. 23. Mystical *Christ* will not be compleat, till once all his Members grow up to the stature of the fulness of *Jesus Christ*, and so from that, there is such an invincible knot of Union, and supernatural relation betwixt us and *Christ*, that a Christian must grow; and if once the first draughts and imperfect lineaments of *Christ's* Image be engraven on our Soul, he will bring it unto perfection, since this is his noble prerogative, That his Work is perfect. There is this al-

so, that speaks a necessity of a Christians growth in Mortification, and all the graces of the Spirit, that the faithfulness of all the Persons of the blessed Trinity, is engaged for this, and is laid in Pawn. It is clear, that the Faithfulness of the first Person of the blessed Trinity is laid in Pledge, from Psalm 92. 14. 15. *They shall still bring forth Fruit in old Age, to shew that the Lord is upright, or faithful:* Which we conceive doth relate to that Promise made by the Father to the Son, in that ancient and eternal Transaction, Isa. 53. 10. And is not the faithfulness of the Son laid in pledge, is not this Commandment of the Father laid upon him, *That of all that are given to him, he should lose none, but raise them up at the last Day* Joh. 6. 39. 40, 41. so that as Christ must be answerable to his Charge, he must present all the gifted ones unto the Father, which presupposeth their growth in Grace, and their being made meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light: And is not the Faithfulness of the third Person of the blessed Trinity likewise engaged in this? In that it is his great work, to apply Christ's purchase, to reveal unto us the whole mind of God, and to communicate all Things that are needful for us to know, and to guide us in all truth, Joh. 16. 13. And if this be his first work, will he not accomplish it, and bring it unto perfection? All which great Works that are committed unto the Holy Ghost to do, have that sweet and precious result, growth in Grace. There is this, Thirdly, That we would have you knowing, that there are some Graces of the Spirit, of whose growth, before we can judge, there must be a Time allotted, Grace is not like the Grass of the Field which groweth in a Night, and perisheth in a Night: it is a woful Practice amongst many, they begin to search their growth, before they have well begun to grow: We would rather counsel you to grow, than to search your growth; though it is indeed a Christians duty to take notice, *to go up early to the Vineyards,*

to see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the Pomegranates bud forth; this is clear from Cant. 7. 12. and from Psal. 63. 8. where David taketh notice, not only of his following after God, but that his Soul did follow hard after him: But if in this we may allude, we shall say this unto you, Judge nothing before the Time, let your Graces grow before you judge of their growth. And there is this, *Lastly*, that we would say, That growing in grace, and the Fruits of the Spirit is a mystery that is more taken up by Faith, than by Sense; we must grow by Faith, and by Faith we will best discern, especially under desertion, and when we are walking under a Cloud, and Christ carves out bitter Things unto us: We confess indeed, when we are dandled upon his Knee, and our Cup of divine Consolations is running over, and he covereth a Table to us in the Wilderness, then our growth may be known by sense.

But as to the Question we proposed, we shall give you these Evidences of your growth in Mortification: There is this, *First*, Those are admitted to read their Names in those ancient and precious Records of heaven, and to know, that they were ingraven upon his Heart, before ever the Corner-stone of the World was laid; this is clear from Revel. 2. 17, and 2. Tim. 4. 8. And the Ground of it is this, that those who are wrestling as Princes with their Lusts, and enduring the heat of the Day, he lets them see a Sight of the Crown, and of that eternal felicity, that so they may endure that good fight of Faith, and persevere to the End, that they may obtain that Crown of Life.

And there is this Ground of it also, because such are much in the Exercise of those two cardinal and architectonick Graces of the Spirit, *Faith* and *Prayer*, by which much divine familiarity and fellowship with God is attained, and so Faith doth increase with the Increase of God.

There is this second evidence, when our Lusts have not

not such power to disturb us in holy duties, as in Prayer, Hearing and Meditating; if you have dispossessed those unclean Things, and can go about those Duties with a great deal of more divine Serenity, and Composure of Spirit; but if this be wanting, it is an Evidence of no great growth in Mortification, as is clear from *Jer. 23. 11*, and *Ezek. 33. 31*. And we conceive, that this is an evidence of growth in Mortification upon these two Grounds; *First*, A Christian, that is much a Victor in this blessed Warfare, is oftentimes under the dreadful Impressions of the Majesty and Holiness of God, by which those sinful stirrings and motions of his Heart are much abated; by Reason of his Terror, he cannot endure himself to be *wish the Fool in the ends of the Earth*, because such a one hath Power over his Spirit, and rules over it, so that he is not like a City broken down, and without Walls. O! but it is much for one, to subject all his thoughts to the Obedience of *Jesus Christ*, to have nothing within him that lifts up the heel against the Knowledge and excellency of *Jesus Christ*. And by the Way, it is a woful and irrational evil, that we lodge Christ in our Face, and in our Mouth we speak of him, and seem to love him, but we lodge Idols in our Heart, that glorious and excellent Mansion, which should be kept for that excellent guest, that *immortal King of Glory*, who is the Light of the higher House.

There is this third Evidence of growth to be much in exalting and magnifying of *Jesus Christ*, and lifting up of that burdensom Stone of his Praise; this was an evidence of *Pauls* growth in Mortification, *Rom. 7. 25*, *1 Cor. 15. 56, 57, 58*. O! but one that hath really tasted of that noble Thing; mortifying and pardoning Grace, their Soul will esteem Christ matchless, and a divine necessity of speaking out his Praise, and setting him on high, will fly upon them :: There are two Special Times, when Christians are put to a divine non-

plus in speaking out his Praise, and are constrained to cry out that Word, *Psal. 65. 1. Praise waits for thee,* (or silent) that is, it cannot be expressed. There is that time when a Christian is caught up, as it were unto the third Heavens, and hath some eminent Discoveries of God, then they are constrained to cry out, *Exalt thy Self, O Lord*; their thoughts are so high of him, that there can be no Expressions found suitable unto his Worth; And we confess indeed, it is hard, if not impossible, to commit any hyperbole in commending of him. And there is that second time when Christians are able to turn the Battel to the gate, and in some Measure are enabled to conquer their spiritual Enemies; Then are they put to this, Who can exalt him who is by infinite Degrees exalted above our Blessing & Praise. Sometimes a Christian is put to that spiritual posture and heavenly Frame, that he cannot make language of his thoughts of Christ, that though his Heart could indite a good matter concerning the King, yet his tongue cannot be the Pen of a ready Writer.

There is a fourth evidence of a Christians growth, When a Christian hath more spiritual discoveries, and insight into his Corruptions, and is more wrestling against them: And we would have you considering these two Things; 1. That discovery of bosom and invisible Lusts, is that which we mainly take to be meant in this evidence, and Wrestling against them. And there is this, *Secondly*, That all our Victories over our Lusts, should increase our antipathy against Sin, and make us to be zealous, till we once shall obtain a compleat Victory, and shall have accomplished our Warfare.

There is a fifth evidence of our growth, when the Remembrance of our former Lusts and Idols, do not provoke desires after the Enjoyment of those Things again, but rather doth provoke the Exercise of Sorrows, that ever that should have been our lot, to have been
under

under the Dominion of such Lusts and Idols: O! but there are many to whom Remembrance of their Lusts will provoke their Affections, *Ezek 23. 19. 21.* and this speaks much strength of Love, that the picture of his Idols should so much inflame him, and gain his Affections. O! but looking upon our old Sins with an affectionate Eye, speaks little growth in Mortification.

There is this last Evidence of our growth, Our high and majestick thoughts of Christ and his Word; for if once our humour be purged out, we shall then *as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word*; and I am perswaded, that as one doth obtain Success in this precious Warfare, he doth ascend in his spiritual Conception of Christ: Such an one is endeavouring that Evangelick and Heavenly Captivity of Affections, to have them all confined unto *Jesus Christ*, that precious and excellent Object; O! but one sight of *Jesus Christ*, in his matchless and transcendent Comeliness, to behold that divine Contemperature, Harmony and Conjunction of all spiritual Graces that are in him, would it not provoke us to cast away our Idols to the Moles and to the Bats, and should not they lose their beautiful Hue and Image? O! but Eternity to contemplate that infinite Majesty that is in him sweetly contemperate with his Lowliness, so that we may say, There is both majestick Lowliness, and lowly Majesty in him; to see likewise his infinite Highness, and his matchless Condescendency; to see his absolute Sovereignty, and his unparallel'd humility; those Things if once they were attained, might make us to cry out, *Who would not love thee, O King of Nations?*

Now that which we shall lastly speak to shall be this, To shew unto yon those Things that speak, and prove our Soul-union, and Heart Conjunction with our Idols, that so we may be provoked to the Mortification of them; There is this, *First*, That we imbrace our Idols after frequent Convictions of the disadvantage of them, that

that after they have been seen in their own native colours, yet we dandle them upon our knee, like that word, *Iſa. 57. 10.* and that, *Jer. 50. 38.* *They are mad upon their Idols*, demented in their pursuits after them; and no doubt this speaks of a most unmortified frame, and one filled with the Love of his Idols. There is this, *Secondly*, That speaks our imbracing of our Idols; upon small Temptations, like that *2 Sam. 12. 2, 3.* There are some Temptations of our Lusts to gain our Affections, and some to gain our Judgment, and to sin without the proposal of some great advantage, or some solacing delight or pleasure, speaks us most strongly united to our Lusts. There is this, *Thirdly*, That speaks that infinite Toil and Labour that we expose our selves to, to satisfy our Lusts; you will see it, *Eccles. 2.* where *Solomon* making pleasure and carnal Joy his Idol, is put to much Toil to satisfy it: And believe it, It is more easie to mortifie your Lusts, than to satisfy them, for that is impossible work. Our Idols have two Daughters that still cry, *Give, Give*: Our Idols are like the Grave, the barren Womb, the Earth that is filled with Water, and the fire, who never cry, *It is enough*: Our Idols have two attendants, *Impatience* and *Diligence*; we will weary our selves in the fire, to obtain Satisfaction to our Lusts; and if we do not attain it, we will curse our King, and look upward. There is this, *Fourthly*, That speaks our Soul-union to our Idols, and, It is imbracing of them, after Application of threatenings, against those who should embrace that Sin; and to commit this Sin with lifted up Hand, is indeed, to sport with the Justice of God, or rather to put a bill of defiance in his Hand, supposing that we are above the reach of his Justice and Power. And there is this, *Fifthly*, That speaks it, our killing of Conversions, which tend to the discovery of the Sinfulness of Sin, and pressing upon us those duties, by which we attain to the Mortification of them; and is it not certain,

n, that we kill our Convictions in the Birth, and make them to prove abortive? Love to our Idols is that which kills our Convictions, and our killing of our Convictions, is the Mother of our Love to our Idols: and there is this, *Lastly*, That speaks our Soul-union with our Idols; those anxious sorrows when we miss the Enjoyment of our Idols, we are then ready to cry out, *It is better for me to die than to live*: and oftentimes, when our Idols are taken from us, and are laid in the Grave, our living Lusts sit down, and lament over the Grave of our buried Idols, crying forth, *Ah, my Lord*. And since there are such invisible, and woeful knots of union betwixt us and our Idols, we should endeavour to have all these knots loosed, and to have our Souls united to him, by these two precious and golden chains of *Faith* and *Love*, and to have our Hearts at *Bethel*, a House for God, and a Temple, for the Holy Ghost, and not a *Beth-aven*, a House of Idols, and a cage for all unclean Birds, that our Spirits may be Mansions for that *Eternal Spirit*, and he may have an arbitrary power over us, and a negative Voice in conducting us to Heaven.

S E R M O N I I I.

1. 51. 24. *And they that are Christs have crucified the flesh with the Affections and Lusts.*

Mortification is that precious duty imposed upon Man, not only by the law of Nature, but by the royal and excellent law of Grace. Doth not the law and light of Nature instruct Man thus, It is better to kill than be killed; And certainly, except a Christian be the ruin of his iniquities, iniquity shall certainly be his ruin. We shall either sing a Song of triumph over our Lusts, or our Lusts shall sing a Song of

or triumph over us; and doth not that royal law of Liberty and Grace enforce this upon us, while it desireth, that we should crucifie our Members which are upon the Earth, and be aspiring after a divine conformity with the Image of the invisible God: Though we conceive, there be some, that if they would retire themselves a little to behold those subtile & invisible Actings of the mystery of iniquity within them, and those deep devices of Satan, and how many strange Lords, beside Jesus Christ, exercise Dominion over them; they might be constrained to put in their Amen unto that truth, that it is more easie for a camel to pass throu the Eye of a needle, than for such unworshiped Christians, as many of us are, to enter into the Kingdom of God. It is better for us to dwell in the house of Mourning, than in the house of mirth. We may say of much of the carnal Joy that is amongst us, Such Laughter is mad, and such mirth, what doth it? We may wish for some retired cottage in the Wilderness, where we may go aside, and spend our seventy Years in the Bitterness of our Soul, and account it marvellous Loving-kindness, if we shall obtain Hope in our End: It is without all Debate, that the general and univerval evil of our Days is, that Christians are so little in the Exercise of this precious Grace of Mortification. We think we take a greater Latitude in our way to Heaven, than that cloud of Witnesses which went before us, did adventure to take: And it is certain, that if one from the dead were admitted to write Commentars upon the disadvantages of satisfying the Lusts of the Flesh, they would point forth marvellous hurt, and infinite loss in exercising any of those: As likewise if any from above were admitted to write upon the advantages of crucifying of the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts thereof, what precious Commendation might they give to those that are exercised in those low, but exalting Works of Mortification? Believe me, this is most certain, that it is easier to mortifie

your Lusts, than to satisfy them: For we conceive, that such an one who is spending his precious Time in the satisfying of his Lusts, doth spend his Time bewixt these three, the impatiency of his Lusts, which will cry forth, *Give, give*; the Impotency and Weakness of the Means he hath to satisfy such Lusts; and the Conviction of the Impossibility of satisfying the insatiable desires, and infinite Lusts of Sin: Anxiety and sorrow, are the constant Attendants of a Man that is not studying to crucify his Lusts and Affections. And certainly, if we may allude to that Word, *Jer. 48. 10. Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from Blood*, he is cursed, that doth not endeavour to crucifie and bring low the seven Abominations of his Heart, that we may with Naphthali and Zebulun jeopard our Lives unto Death in the highest Places of the field, and that there might be none of our Lusts to cry forth within us, *The bitterness of Death is past*; but may endeavour to cut them in Pieces before the Lord. We conceive, this Work of Mortification, is the most pleasant Exercise of a Christian, if not in it's own Nature; yet in its fruit and effects.

Now, before we shall speak any thing unto those things which we proposed to speak of at the last Occasion, we shall speak a little to this, What is the Reason that Christians Resolutions and Purposes to quit such a predominant Lust, and to forsake such an Idol, do oft-times vanish without any fruit? All these cords of divine Resolution by which they bind themselves, are but as tow and flax before the fire of Temptation, they decreasing many things which are not established: And we confess, this is so incident an evil unto his own, that sometimes they are resolved in nothing so much as this, to resolve no more; they in a manner give over the Duty of Resolution, because they are short coming in the Duty of performance: And we conceive, that this is occasioned either through this, that Christians do not resolve upon the strength of a Mediator,

or if they do resolve upon his strength, they are no much in the improvement of it, for the bringing low of such iniquity. And we conceive, This was the ground that *Peter's* Resolutions were brought so much low, and were blasted; and this was somewhat pointed at, *Iſa. 40. 30, 31.* where it is said, *Even the young shall faint and be weary, and the young Men shall utterly fall;* the greatest natural abilities which might help Men to run and not be weary, and the most promising evidences from themselves, shall fail and be blasted but (as it is in the *31. v.*) *they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength,* even those who are denied to their own strength. And we conceive, That there are these two great Mysteries of Christianity, *First*, To resolve so as being convinced of this, That we are not able, as of our selves, to think one good thought: And *Secondly*, Which is a little more mysterious to believe that *Christ's* strength laid hold on by Faith, is as effectual for the crucifying of such a Lust, as if it were our own proper strength and excellency: Certainly, one that hath once swallowed this camel of Christianity needs not strain at the lower gnats of it: We would only say this by the way, Study to flee comparative Resolutions, for ordinarily these are much blasted, as was clear in *Peter*, *Though all shall forsake thee, yet I will not.* Study to be positive in your Resolutions, but beware of Comparisons.

This is likewise occasioned through this, That ordinarily they determine the mortifying of such a Lust rather with their light than with their Affections; and it is sometimes the Exercise of a Christian, when he goeth to Prayer for the mortifying of such a Lust, his light prayeth more than his Affections; And sometime it falls out, that when Light and Judgment is praying for the Mortifying of such an Idol, Affection, as it were entereth a Protestation against the granting of such a desire, And in a manner saith, *Lord mortify not such*

Lust. This we conceive was the case and practice of those who are made mention of Ezek. 14. 4, 5. who came to enquire of the Lord, having their Idols in their Heart : We may put our Idols from our mind, but have our Idols in our Heart, when we come to seek the Mortification of them ; And we would only say this unto you, when ye begin to resolve, study to have yuor Souls under a divine Impression of the Sinfulness of such a Lust, as likewise under the infinite disadvantage of following such a Lust : We conceive, that the ordinary Time of a Christians Resolution is, when they are blessed with the dew of Heaven, and are admitted to taste of his Sweetness : And oft-times Christians Resolutions are rather according to their present frame, than according to that which probably will be their frame ere long : And this is the Occasion that Christians who are big in their Resolutions, are often short and defective in their performances ; or else we conceive it to be occasioned through a Christians being too much given to Slothfulness, and that woful Idol of self-indulgency ; they resolve fair, but do not take pains to accomplish their Vows : This is clearly pointed at, not only Prov. 13. where it is said, *The sluggard desireth, but he hath nothing* : But more clearly, Prov. 21. 25. *The desire of the sluggard stayeth him,* and the Reason is subjoined, *because his Hands refuse to labour.* It is most certain, that except a Christian be diligent, he can never be a mortified Christian ; Mortification is not attained with ease, we must travail in pain, and have the pangs of the New-birth before *Christ be formed in us.*

And there is this, *Lastly,* Which doth occasion it, Christians do not propose to themselves a sublime and divine end in mortifying of their Lusts ; And certainly we conceive this is the most ordinary and incident case unto his own, we either propose this end in mortifying of our Lusts, that we may have somewhat whereof

whereof to glory, and to make mention of our Righteousness, *even of ours only*; or else we propose this carnal End, of studying to have a Name continually amongst the living in *Jerusalem*, lest that inward misery of Iniquity that is within us be engraven on our fore heads. And I think certainly, that Name may be engraven upon many Professors in this age, which *Jude* giveth them, verse 12. of his Epistle, he calleth them *twice dead*, that is, not only dead in reality, but that thorough the Decitfulness of Sin, they had even lost any Name of living they likewise had, so that it was also evanished and gone away. I am perswaded, that were we known each to another, as we are known to him, who *hath these seven Eyes that run to and fro through the whole Earth*, no doubt, we should wonder at the boldness of our hope, and laugh at the strength of our Delusions.

Now that which first we proposed to speak of from the Words, was this, the advantage which a Christian hath by the mortifying of his Lusts, and being continually exercised in this precious Warfare; and (as we cleared at the last Occasion) the advantage of a Mortifying Christian, was his, ordinarily, such a Christian doth live under the Impression of his interest in God, he is admitted to read his Name written in the Book of Life: now this is clear from *Rev. 2. 17.* where he saith, *To him that overcometh, who is in the way of overcoming, will I give a white Stone, and in the Stone a new Name written, which no Man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it*: as likewise from *Rev. 2. 11.* *He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second Death*: as also from *2 Tim. 4. 8.* where these two are sweetly conjoined and linked together. And it must certainly be so, that a mortifying Christian is one that liveth under the divine Impression of his interest in God, not only because of this, that one who is not mortifying his Lusts, as it were, doth darken his Hope, and obscure his evidences

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every Day's Intermision of Mortification, being (as it were) a Score drawn through the Extract of our Peace with God, so that in Proceſs of Time, that precious Extract of Peace becometh illegible unto us. And we shall ſay this, That a Chriſtian who can keep the Faith of his Intereſt, without the exerciſing of Mortification, may ſuſpect the Reality of ſuch Assurance: Mortification and Assurance die and live together, are weak and ſtrong together: But likewise it muſt be ſo, becauſe of this, That ordinarily God rewardeth a mortified Chriſtian with the Intimation of his Peace; he takes them in the eternal Purpoſes of his Heart, and the Secrets of his Counsel, and lets him ſee his Name written in the Records of Heaven, leſt he ſhould faint in the Day of Adverſity, and ſo prove his Strength to be ſmall: Did ye never know what ſuch a Thing as this meant, That when ye were moſt ſerious in the Exerciſe of Mortification, ye were admitted to behold that precious and everlaſting Hope? There is this ſecond Advantage that a Chriſtian hath by being continually exerciſed in this bleſſed Warfare, and it is this, Mortification is that Grace which keeps all the Graces of the Spirit in Action and Exerciſe; it is that ſuperior Wheel, at the Motion of which, all the inferior Wheels do move, and if we may ſo ſpeak, Mortification is this, it's all the Graces of the Spirit combined in one, and exerciſing themſelves in one divine Act. Faith is exerciſed by a mortified Chriſtian, not only in this, in drawing Furniture from Jeſus Chriſt, who is our Head, but likewise, in that it is that deſective Piece of Armour, it being called, (*the Shield of Faith*) by which we quench the Fiery Darts of the Devil: This War will not proceed with much Advantage, if Faith be out of the Field. So alſo the Grace of Hope is exerciſed by a mortifying Chriſtian, for this is its Exerciſe in this bleſſed Warfare, to help up the Crown of immortal Glory in its right Hand, with that Motto engraven upon it, *He that perſevereth to the*

End shall be saved, and obtain this Crown of Life, which is the great Encouragment of a Christian in this Exercise. Likewise the Grace of *Watchfulness* is exercised in this blessed Warfare: For *Watchfulness* (if so we may speak) is the Sentinel of the Christian, that standeth upon the Watch-tower, and giveth Warning unto a Christian of the Motion of his Adversary: *Watchfulness* warneth us when first Corruption begins to stir: So the Grace of *Love* is much exercised in this blessed Warfare: For a Christian where he beholds that divine and unsearchable Compassion of *Jesus Christ* which he exerciseth towards it, and upholding it under its Straits, that when the Archers shoot at him, and do grievously wound him, that yet his Bow should abide in Strength, this makes the Grace of *Love* to burn and live within a Christian. And lastly, The Grace of *Prayer* is much exercised in this blessed Warfare; for when Faith begins to die, and Hope begins to lose its Courage; when *Watchfulness* begins to sleep, and *Love* begins to be remiss, and to wax cold, then *Prayer* as a flying Cherub, doth go to the Captain of our Salvation, and desireth that he may help them in the Day of Need. *Prayer* is the sweet Correspondent of the Christian betwixt Heaven and Earth: *Prayer* stayeth upon the Mount with *Christ*, when *Faith* and *Watchfulness* are in the Field with our Corruptions and Lusts that are in us. And we shall only say this by the Way, I know not whether a Christian be more obliged to *Jesus Christ* for Justification than for Sanctification; but we conceive it is better to conjoin those together, than to compare them one with another.

There is this third Advantage that a mortifying Christian hath, such a Christian doth most ordinarily meet with most divine Solace, and intimate Communion and Fellowship with God; such a Christian is admitted to taste of the Honey out of the Rock, and to be satisfied with the finest of the Wheat. Would ye know

the Reason why you have not been in Heaven these many Days ? It is this, Ye have not been fighting these many Days. Now this is clear from *Rev. 2. 17.* where that Promise is given to the mortifying Christian, That *he shall taste of the hidden Manna*, which is the Sweetness of *Jesus Christ* : As likewise, *Rom. 8. 13.* *If ye through the Spirit mortify the Deeds of the Flesh ye shall live* : As also, *Rom. 7. 24.* verse compared with 25. Where wrestling *Paul* doth receive Songs of everlasting Praise put in his Mouth : Would ye know the Person that is admitted to sing one of the Songs of *Zion*, while he is in a strange Land ? It is the mortifying Christian : For when he is in the Pursuit of his Enemies, he is then admitted to put out his Finger, and taste of the Honey, that his Eyes may be enlightned. There is a Mortification that is pleaded for by many in those Days, whose highest Advancement in this precious Grace doth not consist in that which it is, in knowing and being convinced of, and mourning over Sin ; but by this their Mortification, that one should be dead to the Sense and Conviction of Sin : We shall pass no other Verdict upon such *Antinomian* Mortification as this, but only this, it is indeed the Mortification of Godliness, it is a Crucifying of Repentance and Holiness, it is a killing of the new Man within a Christian ; as likewise a quickning of the old Man in its Lusts and Affections : This Mortification is no other Thing but *Satan* transformed in an Angel of Light ; and this is a Piece of that new Gospel, which is so much preached in those Days, which if an Angel should bring from Heaven, we ought not believe it : This is no new Light, but old Darkness covered over with the Vail of a glistering Light. O ! study to be much under the Impression of the Bitterness of Sin, that so ye may taste of the Consolations of the *Holy Ghost*.

There is this fourth Advantage, that a Christian

hath by being continually exercised in this Warfare, which is, that such a Christian hath distinct and perfect Discoveries, not only of the Deceitfulness of his own Heart, but also of the Subtility of Corruption and Sin that doth assault him: A mortifying Christian is a most experienced Christian, this is clear all along, *Rom. 7.* where wrestling Paul hath so distinct Discoveries of himself, as he saith, There being a Law in his Members rebelling against the Law of his Mind, and bringing him into Subjection. And certainly, there is much precious Advantage that redounds unto a Christian, by being convinced of the Deceitfulness of his own Heart, and of that Mystery of Iniquity that is within him; for such a Christian doth attain to the Exercise of the Grace of Humility: For when he beholdeth himself as in a Glass, he crieth forth, *Wo is me, I am undone.* I think it is in some Sense lawful for Christians to practise much of Peter's Divinity, which he had, *Luke 5. 8* Depart from me, for I am a sinful Man; not that it was well argued by him, but it spake forth the high Apprehensions he had of the Holiness of God, and the low Apprehensions he had of himself: As likewise, such a Christian is much denied to his own Strength, and so is necessitate to go unto one, on whom his Strength is laid; as likewise such a Christian is much in the Exercise of the Grace of Watchfulness; he is not ignorant of the Devices of Satan, which makes him to stand continually upon his Guard, lest he be overtaken with the Snares of the Devil.

There is this fifth Advantage that a Christian hath by being much in the Exercise of Mortification, He doth attain to much divine Conformity with God, and is made a Partaker of the divine Nature, of that invisible Majesty, this is clear from *Rev. 3. 5.* where that Promise, *I will clothe him in white,* is in a Part accomplished to a Christian, even while he is in this Valley of Tears. And certainly, this is the Compend and sweet Epitome

me of all Christian Advantages, to be made like unto the Majesty of God ; and it is not a Conformity unto him for a Day, but such a mortifying Christian, is most constant in keeping the divine Linements, and spiritual Characters of that precious Image undefaced in him, as it is promised *Rev. 3. 12* *Him that overcometh, I will make a Pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.* And certainly that Promise of Stability, is in a Part accomplished to a Christian, even while he is here below ; what could a Christian desire more than this, to be admitted to partake of the Image of the invisible God, and to be made like unto him?

There is this last Advantage that a Christian hath, by being continually exercised in this precious Work of Mortification, Such an one hath his Antipathy and Hatred against Sin much increased. Would you know the Christian that liveth under the Impression of the Sinfulness of Sin? It is the mortifying Christian. I think that vain Distinction which Papists have of mortal and venial Sins, Christians in their Practice do much allow and commend ; there are some Sins seem venial to them, which to commit, and exercise, they take a Latitude to themselves, as may be clear in this, a Christian will without much Difficulty, if he be not tender, commit such Things as are not consistent with the Exercise of Grace within him ; he needs no other Toleration but this, to have this made out to him, that there is a Consistency betwixt such a Lust, and the living and spiritual Nature of Grace within him : But, no Doubt, if we argued right, we should be provoked to desist from Sin, even from the Disadvantages that attend the pursuing after any Lusts.

Now, that which we shall speak to next, shall be this, What Disadvantages a Christian hath by an Interruption of this spiritual Warfare, and not being much taken up in the Exercise of Mortification. If this Question were proposed to many, When they did last set some

Hours apart to mortifie their Sins? the most Part should be put to a *non-plus*, not knowing the last Time when they were exercised in this precious Warfare. And I would only say this, A Christian, that can interrupt the Work of Mortification for some Weeks together, may either suspect that Grace is groaning within him, with the Groanings of a deadly wounded Man; or else that he is not at all begotten unto a lively Hope; there is no Forlosse nor Discharge in this Warfare, but we we must fight till once the one Foot be within that Place of everlasting Delight.

There is this second Disadvantage that attendeth a Christian who interrupteth this Warfare, Ordinarily such a one doth contract much Hardness and Impenitency of Heart; this was clear in the Practice of *David*, who, when once he intermitted this War, could write a Letter to the killing of godly *Uriah*, and no Mention of Smitting of Heart: This is certainly a constant Attendant of one who is not mortifying himself, he maketh his Heart *die as a Stone within him*: The mortifying Christian keeps his holy Zeal within him, *he hateth the Garments spotted with the Flesh*. Would ye read the Original and Rise of Hardness of Heart in these Days amongst us? It is this, Christians are not much in the Exercise of Mortification: And I believe the Gospel hath been preached nigh six thousand Years; and it is much to be debated, if ever Misbelief, and Hardness of Heart were so universal Diseases among Christians as in these Days: We think to win to Heaven by Guess, which maketh us so little intend this blessed Work.

There is this third Disadvantage, that a Christian meets with, by the Intermision of this Warfare, and it is this, That ordinarily such a Christian hath his Lusts most reigning and living within him: Sin will gather more Strength, by the Interruption of one Day's Exercise of Mortification, than ye can prevail over, by wrestling

wrestling with it many Days: This is that subtile Dexterity of Sin, it can recruit it self in few Hours with much Ease; and certainly, if ye be not constant in this warfare, it is like ye will not sing many Songs of Triumph over your Lusts: Ye must be constant in this Fight, who would be a Triumpher in the Fight: How long is it since ye set up an *Ebenexer* to God, saying, *Hitherto hath he helped me*? And when did ye set up Trophies and Monuments of your Victory? We think the Christians of this Age, leave fewest, and least Trophies of their Victory in their Way to Heaven, as ever any that went before them.

There is this fourth Disadvantage which a Christian hath, by the Intermiſſion of this Warfare, and it is this, That ordinarily such a Christian liveth without Sight of Return, and overcoming at the last: A Christian who interrupteth this Exercise of Mortification, fighteth, as we speak, with a doubtful War, not having determined whether the Fight shall be in his Favour or not: There is somewhat of this pointed out in *1 Tim. 4. 8.* where *Paul* fighting in an Agony, as the Word importeth, perswadeth himself, That he shall have that Crown of Righteousness, which is the suitable Reward of a conquering Christian: And believe me, I know not what shall afford a Christian more Christian Peace and Consolation than this, To believe, that *he shall put all Enemies under his Feet, and make them his Footstool.*

There is this fifth Disadvantage, that a Christian interrupting the Exercise of Mortification hath, and it is this, That ordinarily such a one, when he is passing thorow the first and second Gates of Death, and when he is to render up an Account of his Stewardship, hath least Perswasion of his Interest in God. Would ye know the Reason, why Christians die with so little Faith of Evidence? it is this, They have not been much in the Exercise of Mortification: Certainly the Conviction of

Short-coming in this Duty, and the Apprehension of Eternity, and of approaching Judgment, are two sweet Companions together: I think, next to Justification and Faith in Jesus Christ, which is the Hinge of all our Consolation, a Christian hath most Peace in the Work of Mortification in the Day when he shall be standing upon that utmost Limb betwixt Time and Eternity. O! what Consolation had old *Paul*, when he spake these Words, when he was ready to be dissolved, *I have fought the good Fight of Faith*; I doubt much, if ever *Paul* sang a Song of Praise upon a higher Key, than when he sung that Song, *2 Tim. 4. 8. I have fought the good Fight of Faith*: *Paul's* Heart was half transported, when he did rest & upon this, That all his Lusts were dying and killed at his Feet.

And there is this last Disadvantage that attends a Christian, who interrupts this Warfare, That ordinarily such a one is much blasted of God, in the Exercise of other Graces; yea more, he is blasted in the Exercise of Gifts: These two Losses will attend a Christian who interrupts this Warfare. And certainly, if a Christian be blasted in Grace, and be not blasted in Gifts, it is one of the sorest Strokes that can befall him; for certainly, it is a Pillow sewed under our Arm-holes, which makes us pursue Sin without Fear: This is secretly hinted at, *Eccles. 2. 9.* where that which made *Solomon* grove after his Idols, was this also, *my Wisdom remained with me*: He was as wise a Man now, as he was before. And certainly, when Gifts are vigorous, and Graces not, they may sit down and lament over themselves, *Seven Nights and seven Days.*

Now we shall shut up our Discourse at this Time: We shall only speak a little to this, What may be spoken for Consolation, to those who are somewhat serious in accomplishing this Warfare, and yet have not sensible Advantage, nor Success over their Lusts, who have been toiling all Night, and yet have catched No-
thing;

thing ; And we conceive, That God doth ordinarily propose to a tender Christian, those three divine Ends by carving out to them such a Lot, *First*, That he may be kept in a constant Correspondence with the Throne of Grace ; he, in a Manner, wounds us in our Leg, that we may not wander much abroad from his Throne : And certainly, Christians may be convinced of this, that if they had their Will in Mortifying, they would not be much in corresponding ; which may be demonstrate unto you thus, because that which provoketh one to converse with God, is rather a Principle of Necessity, than a Principle of Love : A Christian will go six Times to Prayer, yea, many Times, from a Principle of Necessity, before he go twice from a Principle of Love and Delight. *Secondly*, That the Christian's Faith may be put to Trials and exercised, whether or not we will believe, and rest upon him, notwithstanding that we see not Mortification growing within us : We confess, our little Advancement in Mortification, is the Foundation of Misbelief : And certainly, to his own, God hath this Design, even the Trial of their Grace, whether or not they will believe, and *hope against Hope*. *Thirdly*, The Lord doth it, because he knoweth that a Christian can better improve his little Advancement in Mortification than he can improve his great Success. Believe me, it is certain, That in a Christian's Advancement in Grace, it is more Difficulty to bear it, than to bear his little Advancement and Progress in Grace ; and the great Reason and Occasion of it is, because ordinarily Pride and Arrogancy do blossom and spring off this precious Root of Grace : For what doth decrease to a Christian of the Lust of the Eye, and of the Flesh, seems to accrete to the pride of Life : For as the one seemeth to go down, the other doth ascend and go up. And to you who never knew what this Exercise of Prayer and Mortification meant (are there not many here who never knew

what it was to have any Change in their Life ?) We
 kould only propose this unto you, Did ye never
 Snow what it was to be under the Impression of the
 infulness of Sin ? Or did you ever know what it was
 to water your Couch with Tears, under the Impres-
 sion of it ? like that Word, *Psal. 32. 3.* Where *David*
saith, When I kept Silence my Bones waxed old, through my
Roring all the Day long. That Word *Roring* speaketh forth
 not only this, That sometimes a Christian doth rather
 mourn as a Beast, than complain as a Man, *Roring*
 being the Voice of a Beast, but likewise speaks forth
 this, That sometimes Christians are under such an Ex-
 ercise, that the open Field is a more fit Place for them,
 than the secret Retirements of their most quiet Cham-
 bers. *David* was forced to rore as a Beast, when the
 Bones, which are the Pillars of his House, were waxing
 old and mouldering within him. Certainly the Day is
 coming, when ye who never knew what it was to
 crucifie a Lust, *Christ* shall crucifie you upon that Cross
 of everlasting Pain, when he shall tread you in the
 Wine-press of the Indignation of the most High,
 when he shall make the Arrows of his Indignation
 sharp upon you ; ye who will not quit Sin, Sin shall
 once be your eternal Companion : And when *Christ*
 hath been inviting you so often to quit your Lusts,
 and ye return so often a negative Answer to him, this
 will be the Sentence, which shall be past upon you,
Be it unto you, even as you will, they are joined to Idols, let
them alone ; and certainly, when *Christ* ceaseth to be
 a Reprover, that Man is in a sad and desperate Estate ;
 O ! that ye might once fight this good Fight of Faith :
 Your Scent doth remain with many of you ; are there
 not many here who never knew what it was to spend
 an Hour in secret wrestling and debating with their
 Lusts : The strong Man keeps the House, and so all is
 at Peace with them, there is no going out nor com-
 ing in at the Gates of their City ; But Peace is, as it
 were,

were, Exactors of that House, and those that bear sway within it. O! cursed be that Peace which shall end in everlasting War with God. Would ye know the Exercise, and Case of those who are in everlasting Chains? We can represent it under Nothing so fit as this, It is infinite Justice, and infinite Omnipotency, wrestling and crushing finite and sinful Man; sometimes the Pestil of divine Wrath coming down upon one Part of his Body, and at another Time upon another; they are now living an endless Life of Death, and are spending their Days in a dying Life, they shall be eternally dying and yet never able to die. Are there not some of you, who are so joined to your Idols, that if *Diavels* should come from Hell and preach this Text to you, *Crucifie your Lusts*, ye would stop your Ears at that precious Exhortation. Ye may hide Sin under your Tongue, but be perswaded, That at last it shall be in your Belly as the Poison of Asps, and as the Venom of Dragons. And we would leave this Advice and Counsel upon Christians, who have begun this precious Warfare, *stand fast in the Liberty, wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again into the Yoke of Bondage.* Sin is a Yoke that neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear; and we desire you to meditate upon this Advice. Study to be as much in Mortification, and in the Exercise of this Duty, as if ye were to obtain Salvation by Works; but withall, study to be as much denied unto those Things, and to have as low an Esteem of your selves, as if ye were bound to do Nothing, or had done Nothing at all: Study to work as one that is a Legalist indeed, and one who desires to maintain good Works, but study Self-denial, as one that hath fled for Refuge unto that blessed Hope that is set before you. *Christ* is standing at the End of the Walk of a mortifying Christian, with a Crown in his Right hand, and he desireth us to persevere unto the End, that we may obtain that immor-

tal Crown one Day with precious Christ, shall be an infinite Recompence of all our Toil, and the more Exercise of Mortification you are put to, Heaven will be more sweet and delightfom unto you.

S E R M O N I V.

Gal. 5. 24. *And they that are Christ's have crucified the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts.*

SUCH ^{is} that universal Stupidity and Hardness of Heart that hath overtaken the Professors of this Generation, that if Christ should come from Heaven, and read over unto us the compleat Roll of our Iniquities, and show unto us these Records, in which all our Wanderings are written, the most Part of us would not be much affected in the Exercise of Sorrow. No doubt, it is easier for a Camel to pass thorow the Eye of a Needle, than for stupid Christians, such as we are, to enter into the Kingdom of God. It is one of the Mysteries of his overcoming Grace, that he hath not broken these two precious Staves of Beauty and Bands amongst us, that he hath not broken the Covenant of his Peace, and ceased to entertain so near a Relation betwixt himself and us. As always, it is a Mystery of his Love, That we are not made eternal Monuments of the Justice of his Love, and this Motto engraven upon us, *Behold these that made not God their Refuge*: God is glorious in the Exercise of all his holy Attributes, but in none more, than in the Exercise of his Patience, and Long-suffering toward us; and in a Manner, he darkneth the Glory of his Justice, and casteth a Vail over his spotless Holiness, that the Exercise of the Attribute of Patience, and Long-suffering, may be rendred more conspicuous. I only pose
you

you with this Question, Is not Mortification a Mystery unto your Practice ? Can such a Delusion as this overtake you, that ye shall reign with *Christ*, though your Lusts reign with you as long as ye are here ? It is certain you know, That Mortification is that precious Exercise in which ye ought to be taken up : And I conceive, That there is only this Difference betwixt sinning against Light, and that unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost, that the sinning against Light, is a sinning against the common Work of the Spirit upon your Understanding ; but the Sin against the Holy Ghost, is a Sin against the *common Work* of the Spirit, upon the Affections : And, no doubt, there is a near bordering betwixt these two, it is the first Step to it by which ye go up and ascend unto the Acting of this Sin. It is a faithful Saying. (saith the Apostle *Paul*) *If we die with Christ, we shall also reign with him ;* and we may likewise say, It is a faithful Saying, That if we be not with *Christ*, and be not conformed unto him in his Suffering, we cannot be conformed unto him, in the Power of his Resurrection. Ye are all willing to take *Christ* as a *Justifier*, and as a *Saviour*, but unwilling to take him as a *Sanctifier*, and as a *Prince* : But know this, That the Gifts of this spotless Lamb, are so sweetly linked together, that they were like his own Coat that was upon his Body, which was without Seam, that could not be divided : And so, except the whole Gifts of *Jesus Christ* fall upon us by divine Lot, we can have no Part nor Portion therein : This Mortification is the Compend of Christianity : And certainly, a Christian reading these Words, he he may stand amazed, and be ashamed at his own Stupidity, that Interest in *Christ* should be connected with such a Degree of Mortification, though we conceive, there be many who take to themselves the Name of Christians, that never knew what it was to exercise themselves in Mortification.

I shall only (before I speak to that which mainly we intend to speak to) press this Grace of Mortification upon you by these Things, *First*, This may increase this Duty of Mortification of Lusts, because it is impossible for one to satisfy their Lusts, let them accomplish never so diligent a Search to find satisfaction to them; therefore ye would be undeceived and convinced of that Delusion, ye conceive, that if your Lusts had their Desire, they would be satisfied; but is most clearly held forth to be false, *Psal.* 78. 29, 30. where it is said of their Lusts, *they got their Hearts Desire*; and the Words that are subjoined, *yet were they not estranged from their Lusts*. Let a covetous Man suppose this with himself, that upon the having of so many Thousands in the World, his Lust of Covetousness would be satisfied, but *Job* doth refute this, *Chap.* 20, 22. Saying, *In the Fulness of his Sufficiency, he shall be in Straits*: It is easier to mortify your Lusts, than to satisfy them. And this, *Secondly*, We would say, That though ye hid Sin under your Tongue, and though it be sweet unto you, yet know, That the Day is approaching, when it shall be in your Bowels, as the Gall of Asps, and as the Poison of Dragons: Know this for a Certainty, that the momentary Pleasures of Sin which they afford unto you, are not worthy to be compared with that eternal Weight of unsupportable Misery that shall be inflicted upon you. O! but it is a terrible Sight to behold a living God entering eternally in the Lists with a poor sinful Sinner, to have Omnipotency and Justice fighting against the Dust of his Feet. There is this lastly which we would say, Not exercising your selves constantly in this precious Work of Mortification, doth interrupt much Fellowship, that you might have with *Christ*; ye that are tasting of the Sweetness of Sin, cannot taste of the Sweetness of Heaven: This is clear, *Rom.* 8. 13. where Mortifiers have that Promise, *That they shall live*. And.

I shall only say this by the Way, We conceive it to be a Question that is difficult to determine, Whether it be more for the Advantage of one that is under any predominant Lust, to have the Objects upon which it feeds withdrawn, or to have them furnished, to feed upon? As for Instance, If one be under the woful predominant of Pride, it is a Question, Whether the Want of Occasion to exercise and feed that Lust, be better, or to have it? Proud *Ambrosius*, when he wanted the Objects upon which Pride doth feed, he will go and strangle himself; and when we have them furnished unto us, what secret Idolatry, what desperate Atheism do we commit in the secret Temples of our Heart, and in the Chambers of our Imagery? Mortify more, or ye shall pray less.

Now that which we intend mainly to speak to, is that second Thing which we proposed concerning Mortification, from these Words, and it was the Extent of Mortification, That they did not only crucifie their predominant Lusts which are here called *Affections*, because they are Idols, and these are linked together by that Passion of Love; but likewise they ought to mortifie the first Motions and Stirrings of Corruption, and all Occasions to it, which are here called *Lusts*: But moreover, one that is a spiritual Mortifier, must mortifie original Sin, which is here called *the Flesh*, as oftentimes it hath that Name in Scripture, an Exercise which is unknown to many, if not unto all: We think original Sin but a *Zoar*, and it is hard indeed, to be convinced of the Sinfulness of original Sin, and to take it up in its native Colours. Now in speaking upon the Work of Mortification of original Sin, we shall not insist long upon this, That it is the Duty of a Christian to be exercised in the crucifying of this Sin, it is clear from *Col. 3. 5*, where we are commanded to mortifie our Members; and it is clear from the Practice of *Paul*, *Rom. 7. 24*. O wretched Man that I

am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death? There is a strong Emphasis in the Word *me*, as if *Paul* would have said, If infinite Grace can have Bounds, then, no doubt, sinful *Paul* is the Bounds fixed to it.

We shall for more clear speaking to this, *First*, Speak a little unto this, What is original Sin; and we conceive, that it stands in these: Original Sin is the Imputation of that Transgression of *Adam* unto us, for he being a common and representative Person, we fell in his Falling, and did stand in his Standing: But likewise original Sin doth comprehend this, want of original Righteousness, Man not being created after that noble Pattern and divine Idea, *the Image of God*: Man now carrieth the Image of *God* in his Wisdom, and in his Omnipotency; but while he was in his primitive State, he did carry an Impression of the Holiness of *God*: As likewise original Sin doth comprehend this, a Proneness to the committing of all Evil, as also an Ineptitude, and Unfitness for the doing of any Good; and this is that which we are all by Nature. The first Part of original Sin is clear from *Rom. 5. 12.* and *14 Verses*. And the rest may be gathered from many Places of Scripture, but is comprehended in that one Word, *Eph. 2. 3. We were dead in Sins and Trespases*: One can no more move in the doing of any spiritual Good, than if he were one altogether without Life.

We shall, *Secondly*, Speak a little to those Advantages that a Christian may have, by being convinced of original Sin: It is most certain, That a Christian is less convinced of original Corruption, than he is of any actual Transgression almost that doth befall him; and (as we were speaking) the Reason of it doth proceed partly from this, That a Christian taketh not up the Sefulness of original Sin, though it be a Sin having more in it, than is in twenty, yea an hundred actual Transgressions: Or else it proceedeth from this, That

Christians.

There would n, no Speak con-mpu-or he e fell e like- f ori- r that Man nd in itive iness hend il, as ag of Na- from ther- pre- dead e & al- to. ages ori- lcs- any and ceed- e the ving- tual That- ians.

Christians are not convinced what influence original Sin hath upon all the outward Actings of Iniquity; it is that fruitful Womb, that doth always bear Twins, and is never barren: It is that Roof that doth daily bring forth Wormwood and Gall: Or else it doth proceed from this, That we think that original Sin is not our own, and that we are not so guilty, as if indeed we had eaten the cursed Apple.

But as to the Advantages of being convinced of original Corruption, we conceive that there is this first Advantage, That it is impossible for any to have high Thoughts of *Jesus Christ's* Love, and of the Offer of Mercy except he be convinced of original Sin. Would ye know the Reason why *Christ* hath so small an Esteem among you? It is because of this, ye are not convinced of your original Corruption: This is somewhat pointed at, *Rom. 5. 6, 7, 8. Verses*, where the Apostle heighteneth the Love of *Christ* in dying for us, he pitches upon this to commend it, our original Corruption, that we were Sinners, and without Strength O! what a Mystery is the condescending Grace of *Christ* unto a Sinner believing original Corruption; it is as it were, the Foundation upon which all our Esteem doth arise and spring: There is somewhat of this likewise pointed at, *Rom. 7. 24.* compared with Verse 25. where *Paul* beginning to commend free Grace, his Song doth arise to the highest Key, because he hath been convinced of *this Body of Death that dwelleth within him*. I would only say this, If ye would learn this divine Lesson of putting a high Account upon *Christ*, study original Corruption much.

There is this second Advantage that a Christian hath from the Conviction of it, and it is this, It doth exceedingly commend the Omnipotency of his Grace in mortifying Corruption, when ye are convinced of this Sin. When was it that *Paul* had the highest Account of the Omnipotency of the Grace of *Christ*? was it not when

when he was forced to cry forth, *O! wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death?* And this is certainly painted at, *Eph. 2. 1.* where the quickning Virtue of Grace is commended from this, the Object upon which it is exercised, *ye that are dead in your Sins and Trespases.*

There is this third Advantage that floweth from Conviction of original Sin, and it is this, It is a compendious Way to keep the Christian under the Exercise of Humility, under the highest Attainments of Mortification, or under the highest Attainments of Communion and Fellowship with God. Would ye know the Reason why we are so easily puffed up under some small Success, or some small Familiarity with *Christ*? It is want of reflex Thoughts upon original Corruption that is within us: Therefore I would prescribe this to Christians under their highest Advancement by Grace, to sit down and seriously reflect upon that which they are by Nature, *That their Father is an Amorite, and their Mother an Hittite, and the Rock from whence ye are hewn, may preach Humility to them*; this is clear, *Rom. 7. 24.* where *Paul* under the Conviction of original Sin, calleth himself a *wretched Man*, and is clear also from the 9. Verse of that Chapter, where, when once original Sin is discovered, *he died in his own Apprehensions*: If we were in the Apprehension of this more, the Wind of the Wilderness would not bind us up in her Wings, till our Substance were dissolved.

There is a fourth Advantage a Christian hath from the Conviction of original Corruption, and it is this; It keepeth the Christian under the deepest Impression of the Sinfulness of Sin. I confess, That is one of the greatest Mysteries of Christianity, to have our Soul constantly under the Impression of the Sinfulness of Sin, which we conceive, is impossible to be attained without solid Conviction of original Corruption; this

somewhat hinted at, Rom. 7. 13. when Paul once by the Commandment, having original Sin discovered, Sin became unto him *exceeding sinful*: And the Reason why original discovered, hath such influence upon this, is because, ordinarily we conceive, That the Actings of Sin do not proceed from our selves, but from *that Deceiver of the Brethren*, which James doth abundantly refute, for when a Man is tempted, he is *enticed by his Lusts*.

There is this fifth Advantage that a Christian hath by being convinced of original Sin: It is an excellent Way to keep the Christian under a most watchful and fearing Frame: Such Language would not be heard out of Hazael's Mouth, *Am I Dog to commit this?* If he had been convinced of original Sin; but because he was a Stranger to this, his Presumption led him above that which was indeed within him: Therefore, when one is convinced of their Proneness to act Iniquity, of their Want of Conformity with God, they remember to stand their Watch-tower, lest they be ensnared: This is most clearly pointed at, 1 Cor. 9. 27. where Paul is put to this Exercise, *I bear down my body, and bring it into Subjection*; and the Reason is subjoined, because he was possessed with a holy Jealousie of himself, and entertained a divine Suspicion, which was consistent with the Actings of Hope. I know Nothing to make a Christian watch over his own Heart so much as this; to see that Spawn of Iniquity which is within him, to behold that fruitful Mother of Iniquity, which never was declared barren, and never shall be, till Sin shall be no more within his own.

There is this sixth Advantage a Christian hath, by being convinced of original Corruption; It is that which will keep the Soul under the highest Estimation of Christ, and will make the Grace of Love to burn most vigorously within a Christian: O! but when we shall reflect upon these two, the spotless Holiness
of

of Christ, that absolute Purity of that precious Lamb, shall again descend to rest & upon these Mysteries of iniquity which are with himself, it is no wonder that sometimes he be put to use *Peter's* Divinity, to cry forth *Depart from me, for I am a sinful Man*; but when improveth his Fight most fully, his Cases, to have his Soul transported, and as it were in a holy Extasy of Love towards that precious and matchless One.

And there is this last Advantage that a Christian has by being convinced of original Sin. It is that which putteth a Christian to a holy Diffidence in his own Strength, and maketh him to be much in the Employment of the Strength of him, whose Name is *Jehovah*. What is the Reason that Christians commit a Breach of the first Command, so much trusting to their own Strength, and not making Mention of his Righteousness, and laying hold upon his Strength: even upon his only this, because we do not dwell under the constant oppression of original Corruption. We conceive it is great a Mystery to Mens Judgment as it is a Mystery to their Practice to mortifie it. What made *Paul* much to cry forth, *Rom. 7. 18.* to disclaim his own Ability and *Perse 23. 6* was it not the Conviction of original Sin, which was within him?

Now that which we shall, *Secondly*, Speak unto, shall be this. To press a little upon you the Necessity of the Mortification of original Sin: And we conceive the Things point out its Necessity; *First*, This, that Mortification is in Vain, and as the Beating of the Air until once original Corruption be mortified: What is all your Mortification without this? as it were the lopping off of the Branches, while the Root doth remain intire, it is a damming up of the Streams, while the Fountain is still running: And no doubt, that Mortification will easily grow vain.

You must once mortifie that which is the Mother Sin. And we would only say this by the Way, that under Correction, we conceive, That original Sin is not

or cannot well be mortified in the Body, but only is to be mortified in the Members, that is, we must study to mortifie such a Part of original Sin, to mortifie some of our Luffs, which are within us, and so be groaning under the rest; for we conceive, it is hard to take up the whole Body of original Sin, and to make it the Subject of Mortification, or to lament over it. There is this, *Secondly*, which speaks forth the Necessity of Mortification of original Sin, it is that, which is an undeniable Evidence of a Christian, to be taken up in the mortifying of this Sin; for we conceive it to be impossible for a Hypocrite to attain to such a length, as to study the real Mortification of original Corruption: It was the Practice of these two holy Men, the Apostle Paul, Rom. 7. 24. and of David, Psal. 51. 5. where they sit down to lament over the iniquity which was within them. And the Reason why the Mortification of original Sin, is an undeniable Character and Evidence of a Christian, is not only from this, That one that setteth about the Mortification of original Sin, is a Christian that hath most Discoveries of himself, as likewise some Discoveries of the Holiness and Spotlessness of God. It is hard to be convinced of original Sin by the Light of Nature, if at all: For to say it is a Question, if he can be, which the Apostle seemeth to intimate, Rom. 7. 7. saying, *I had not known Lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* There is this, *Thirdly*, which speaks forth the Necessity of Mortification of original Corruption, That the Duties that proceed from a Christian, are exceedingly defiled and polluted, except he endeavour the Mortification of this Sin: For this was a Paradox to the Apostle James, Chap. 2. 11. *That a Fountain at the same Place shall send forth bitter Water and sweet,* and till the Fountain of Corruption be removed; it is probably to be conceived, That all the Actings of Duty by us shall be exceedingly polluted. O! but when original Sin

Sin lies without the Stroke of a Christian's Mortification, his Duties will not ascend with Acceptance upon his Altar.

And there is this, *Fourthly*, Which pleads the Necessity of the Mortification of original Sin, That it is the Sin, which doth exceedingly war against the Grace of God in a Christian: Would you know why Grace is such a languishing Estate? it is because of the Power of original Sin. We conceive this, That the Opposition of original Sin to the Advancement of Grace, is more invisible, and the Opposition of actual Corruption unto the Actings of Grace, is more visible and obvious; but certainly, That which doth intangle a Christian in his Walk, and maketh him not to ascend as Pillars of Smoke from this present Wilderness, *that original Sin*: This is clear, *Rom. 7. 23. and Gal. 17. Where the Spirit warreth against the Flesh, and the Flesh against the Spirit, and these two are contrary one to another.*

Now that which, *Thirdly*, We shall speak upon the Mortification of original Sin, shall be this, What is the Way how a Christian may be convinced, and brought unto the spiritual Impression of original Sin? And certainly we conceive, That if a Christian shall exercise himself in these three, he may attain to some spiritual Convictions of this Sin. *First*, Let him be much in the Exercise of Self-examination, and when he shall reflect upon himself, he will behold the invisible Motions of Iniquity unto every Sin that hath been named among the Gentiles: Who is so great a Stranger unto his own Heart, but if he will reflect upon it, may sometimes see the Stirrings of unknown (almost) Corruptions, which speaketh that aloud to the Christian, That there is a Fountain and Spring within him, that would set forth such bitter Waters, except they were graciously restrained.

There is this, *Secondly*, By which a Christian may be brought to the Conviction of original Sin, and it

To be much in the Exercise of the Study of the Spirituality of the Law, which was the Way that *Paul* attained to the Conviction of original Sin, *Rom. 7*. It is that compendious Cut, by which one may behold that Holiness of God, who imposeth a Command, not only to desist from the Actings of Sin, but to desist also from the first Motions and Lusts of Sin.

There is this, *Lastly*, A Christian would be much in the Exercise of Prayer, for that Spirit who convinceth the World of Sin, that what you do not know as of your selves, he who is the great Convincer of the World, may imprint those Convictions upon your Souls, which may make you sit down, and bewail your selves, in the Bitterness of your Spirit. And we shall at this Time shut up our Discourse; only we would say to these who are entertaining this holy Warfare against their Corruptions, That they would not be much discouraged, though they see not sensible Victory: You must know that Sin must be with you while ye have a Being: We may certainly allude unto that Word, *Dan. 7. 12*. And we may say, That the Dominion of your Sins shall be taken away, though their Lives be prolonged for a Time and for a Season. As likewise we shall say this for your Encouragement, who have your Corruptions stirring most within you, That ordinarily Satan, when he is in the Way to remove, then stirreth and acteth most; as is observed, That the last Beating of the Pulse in a dying Man is most strong, so the Beating of Corruption, when it is going to be cast out, may be most violent. And we shall only give the Reason, why Christians are not much affected with this, That the Day is coming when once they shall prevail over their Corruptions, and shall tread Satan under their Feet; why the Feet of those who bring such good Tidings are not beautiful upon the Mountains? And we conceive that it doth either proceed from this, That Christians are not seriously engaged

engaged in this holy Warfare; for it is most certain That if you were fighting Day by Day, then the Hope of Victory, and of a blessed Issue, would be as glad Tidings from a far Country, and should be as cold Water to a thirsty Soul, that though your Hope were deferred until your Hearts were sick, yet the Accomplishment of your Desires should be sweet to your Souls: Or else it doth proceed from this, That Christians do not believe this Truth, That there is an Issue and Period of their Fight: if once you could be brought to this Length to seal this Truth, That that Victory shall be once heard in Heaven, *Speak comfortably to Jerusalem, for her Warfare is accomplished*, if we may allude unto these Words; or if a Christian be seriously debating with his Lusts, and hath also the Faith of this Truth in some Measure, then it doth proceed lastly from this, Want of the distinct Perswasions of our Interest, and Want of the Assurance of our Peace with him; for as long as a Christian is under Debate concerning his eternal Rest, he cannot be much affected with Joy under the Declaration of these Means, That there is a Period of their Fight, and that they who have been made Partakers of the first Resurrection over them, the second Death shall have no Power. O! what a blessed Day suppose ye, shall that be, when your Feet shall stand within the Gates of the new Jerusalem, when ye shall receive these two precious Badges and eternal Trophies of your Victory, a Crown put upon your Head, of infinite more Value than all material Crowns, and a Palm put in your Hands. We conceive, it is impossible to determine, what Joy will accrue to a Christian upon the reflex Thoughts of this, That he hath trode Satan under his Feet, and hath bruised the Head of him, who hath so often bruised his Heel: And as for those who are Strangers (as the most Part of us are) unto this Spiritual Warfare, be convinced of this, That within threescore, and fewer Years, God shall enter into an

etern

ain eternal Warfare with you, where there shall be no
Cessation of Arms, neither shall there be any Interrup-
tion. It is better to fight with your Lusts, than to
fight with a living and eternal God, when he shall de-
clare himself to be your Opposite and Enemy.

Man once was made perfect, but he did find out
many Inventions, and among all those Inventions,
he found that accursed one, how there might be a
Separation betwixt him and the living God; and ex-
cept He whose Name is Prudence, and hath found out
the Knowledge of many witty Inventions, had found
out that precious Invention of reconciling Sinners un-
to God, we shall have been *Magor-missabib*, a Terrour
to our selves. O! that you might be perswaded once
to contend with your Lusts, that ye may endure the
Heat of the Day, and the Cold of the Night, in wrest-
ling against Sin; know this, that *Sin goeth not out but by*
fasting and Prayer; it is so straitly united unto us, it is
as hard as for a Camel to pass thorow the Eye of a Needle,
than for many of us to mortifie our Corruptions. We
shall shut up all that we would say in this one Word,
be perswaded of this, That the Day is approaching and
near at Hand, when our blessed Lord Jesus shall come
with ten Thousands of his Saints; what if this were
the Day (O unmortified Sinners!) that ye should be-
hold that white Throne fixed in the Clouds, and ye
should have a Summons given into your Hands, with-
out Continuation of Days, to appear before his Tri-
bunal? What could ye answer when ye are reprov'd?
Would not Silence and Confession be your best Defence?
Certainly there is an eternal Curse to be pronounced
against those who do not exercise themselves unto
this precious Act of Godliness of crucifying the Flesh,
with the Lusts and Affections thereof. There is a Law of
Death over your Head, and there is a Law of Sin, which

is within your Hearts, and ye shall be eternally Subjects unto these two Laws, except *the Law of the Spirit of Life do make you free.*

S E R M O N II.

Gal. 5. 24. *And they that are Christ's, have crucified the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts.*

THe Walk of a Christian, who hath Christ in him *the Hope of Glory*, is most sublime, and it being from spiritual Principles, for spiritual Ends, is also according to a spiritual Rule. The Walk of a Christian is from Faith and Love in Jesus Christ, as that predominant Principle; nay more, from the Spirit of Christ, living in the Soul of a Christian by Faith, and dwelling in it by Love, which is that *primum Mobile* and first Wheel of all its Motions; as likewise, it is for a spiritual End, it being *for the Glory of God*, and subordinate unto this their own Salvation, and Advantage, they are not like Ephraim, *empty Vines*, bringing forth Fruit unto themselves, but it is their Design to make Christ all, and themselves Nothing, though it be natural unto a Man to *deifie himself*, and to make himself the first Alpha of his Actions, and the last Omega of his Performances: As likewise, it is according to a spiritual Rule, it being conformed unto that precious *Word of Life*, which is perfect in it self, and leadeth Man unto Perfection. But this is a Lamentation, and shall be a Lamentation, That we love to take such a Liberty our selves, and such a Latitude in our Way and Way to Heaven. There is much Fear and Complaint among many, for the Loss of their civil Liberties, and that they are detained Captives in their own Land by the Hand of Strangers, but their is a Captivity and Bo-

age that is less lamented, and yet more intolerable, and that is, the Bondage of Sin and Iniquity, that though we should expire and spend seventy Years, (which is one of the utmost Lines of our Life) under this Captivity, yet we should not cry forth, *Return our Captivity, as the Rivers of the South.*

Are there not many amongst us, who ly with as much Contentment under the Bonds of their Sin, and Fetters of their Iniquity, as if they were Chains of Gold, and Ornaments of fine Gold? Mortification is a Mystery unto our Practice: That which was a Paradox to Saul, That a Man should find his Enemy, and yet keep him alive, that Paradox is often committed in these Days, when we do not study to crucifie he Lusts and Affections of our Heart. I think, Christians in these Days, when they reflect upon those unmortified Corruptions that are within them, must be constrained to cry forth, that all their Hope doth consist in this, *That a living Dog is better than a dead Lion,* and that their Confidence is terminate upon this, and yet they are within this Side of Eternity. We love Singularity in Opinion, but hate Singularity in Practice, though the one, no doubt, is much more commendable than the other. May we not wish for two Months, wherein we may go unto the Mountains, and bewail our Virginity, that we have not been espoused unto that precious and excellent one *Jesus Christ*, and that we have not been endeavouring to conform our selves unto his blessed and precious Image? We confess this may be a Mystery to many every Day. That they are not eternal Monuments of the Justice and Indignation of God, and that somewhat of *Cain's* Divinity doth not possess our Hearts, that *whosoever shall find us, shall kill us.* We would only say this, That ye would be as much in the Exercise of the Mortification of your in-

visible Lusts, as ye are in the Exercise of the Mortification of your visible Sins and Iniquities.

At the last Occasion that we spoke upon these Words, we told you that the second Thing that was held forth concerning Mortification, was the Extent of it, That a Christian ought to mortifie not only original Corruption, but also his predominant Lusts, and the first Motions, and Occasions unto Sin. Concerning the Mortification of original Sin, we have spoken somewhat, and shall insist no further: Only we would say this, That we laid down this as a Conclusion, That original Sin could not be mortified in its Body, but only was to be mortified in its Members, and the Ground of this Assertion we conceive to be this, Because it is impossible for a Christian to take up original Sin in its Body, as is clear from *Jer. 17. 9.* where it is said, *That the Heart is deceitful above all Things and desperately wicked, who can know it?* It is above the Reach of any Man, no fathom and comprehend the Deceitfulness of his own Heart. It is a Mystery that was never unfolded, and as long as we are within Time, cannot be unfolded. We would only say this, That a Christian who is convinced of original Sin, that there is the Spawn and Seed of every imaginable Corruption within him, will be much in the magnifying of restraining Grace, and will sit down, and pen a Song of Praise unto the unfearchable Grace of *Christ*, who hath redeemed them. I confess, That which makes Christians have so much to do with pardoning Grace, which was *David's* Practice, *1 Sam. 25. 32.* We may call original Sin *Gad*, for after it cometh forth a *Troop*, *Choru Vitiarum*, a Troop of Vices; it is that fruitful Womb that doth always bear Twins. And we conceive, That Christians who are so called, ought to be much in the Study of original Sin. It is a Wonder, That we walk with so much Contentment to Heaven, and to that imagined Happiness which ye suppose to have: Can such a Delusion as this overtake

overtake you, that you can reap in Joy, who never did sow in Tears, and that you can return, bringing Sheaves in your Bosoms, who never went forth bearing precious Seed? We think to climb to Heaven by that short Ladder of Presumption: I would say it, and wish, that you may consider it; We are afraid that there shall be many woful and sad Disappointments of many of our Hopes, and we shall be constrained to reject our Confidence: We separate those Things which God hath conjoined, we either pursue for Holiness without Justification, or else we pursue for Justification without Holiness.

Now in speaking upon the Mortification of predominant Lusts, which are here called *Affections*, because the Spirit of a Christian, and of any, are most strongly united unto these: We shall not insist to prove this unto you, That it is the Duty of a Christian, or any, to mortifie their predominant Lusts, it is clear from *Matth* 18. 8, 9. Where we are commanded to pluck out our right Eye, if it offend us, the Meaning of which is this, That if we had a Lust as dear to us as our right Eye, if it hurt and offend us, we should pluck it out; and from *Mark* 9. 44. and 47. and from *Col.* 3. 5. where we are commanded to mortifie our inordinate *Affections*. Neither, shall we insist much upon that Distinction of predominant Lusts, That there are some predominant Lusts which are more pure and refined, which ordinarily pass under the Notion and Vail of Virtue; as Pride, when it is mixed with Prudence in its Actings, passeth under the Vail of Generosity, and Highbness of Spirit and Prodigality, when it is not sensual and brutish, passeth under the Notion of Mortification to the World; and Satan in tempting People to the acting of these predominant Lusts, doth not only study to gain the Affections, but likewise studieth to gain our Light, and our Judgment unto the acting of these Things: There are some predominant Lusts which are more gross; the Sinsfulness

of which is more easily discerned, and Satan in tempting People to the Acting of these Lusts, studieth mainly to gain the Affection, which in so far gaineth the Judgment, as it sets about to devise and meditate upon the Way, how such predominant Lusts may be effectuate and accomplished. O ! but the Mind of Man will plot subtile Iniquity, and the Affection and Heart will execute the Plotings of the Mind, with greatest Carefulness and Sedulity.

Now that which, *First*, We shall speak upon the Work of Mortification of predominant Lusts, shall be this, What are these Disadvantages that a Christian hath by not studying to mortifie and crucifie his predominant Lusts, but giving Way and Concession to them to live.

The first Disadvantage we conceive to be this, That a Christian who is not much in the Mortification of his predominant Lusts, doth hinder much of that precious Fellowship and divine Familiarity which should be betwixt God and him : The giving Way to the King of our Lusts to live, Friends, and that Word is true, *That a Brother offended, is harder to be won than a strong Castle.* Now this is clear from Ezek. 14. 5. where it is said, *They are estranged from me by their Idols : As likewise, Ver. 7. of that Chapter, Every one that separateth himself, whether of Israel, or a Stranger, and setteth up Idols in his Heart, a Separation from God, and setting up Idolatry, are two inseparable Companions : As likewise, it is clear from Ezek. 44. 10. where these are conjoined again ; and Isa. 59. 2. Your Iniquities have separated betwixt you and me.* And I would only say this, That a Christian who can to his Apprehension, find some Sweetness and Enjoyment of God, without the Exercise of Mortification, may question much the Reality of his Enjoyment : And it is certain. That the entertaining of predominant Lusts, doth exceedingly interrupt Communion and Fellowship with God ; not only because of this, that predominant Lusts when they are in Exercise,

do exceedingly weaken a Christian in Diligence, and in his Zeal and Fervency in going about these Duties, by which Communion with God is attained. Some Folks predominant Lusts have gotten such Advantage over them, That they will almost cease to pray without Conviction; or if they be convinced, their Convictions will suddenly vanish: But also because of this, that when a predominant Lust is in it's vigorous Exercise, then a Christian loseth much of the Impression of the Sweetness of Communion and Fellowship with Christ. O! but Christ might live long in Heaven, ere we give him a Visit; we think we could be happy without him, and that is but an imaginary Delusion of our lying Lusts.

There is this second Disadvantage that a Christian hath, by not studying to crucify his predominant Lusts, and it is this, That such a Christian doth not receive any Return of Prayer, and God doth deny to him the Answer of his Desire; this is clear from Ezek. 30. 31. where he saith, *Do ye pollute your selves with your Idols, and come and enquire at me? As I live, saith the Lord, I will not be enquired of by you.* And this was the Divinity of that blind Man, John 9. 31. *God heareth not Sinners:* And it was the Divinity of David, Psal. 66. 18. *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, God will not hear my Prayer:* And most clearly, Isa. 59. 2. where their Iniquities do cause him deny to hear their Suits. O! but there are many Inhibitions served in Heaven against the Professors of this Generation, that they should pray and not be heard, and should cry and yet not have Access: And certainly it is no Wonder, That such Prayers as we present unto God, while our predominant Lusts are in Exercise, be not heard; we pray to God with such Indifferency and Formality, as in a Manner we turn over our Prayers into a Complement to salute God with in the Morning, and to take our Farewel of him at Night, we know not much.

much more Use of many of our Prayers, and hence it is that he denieth to us the Answer of them. I would only speak this to you, Let Christians Hearts first speak the Words which they are to speak in Prayer, and then let their Words speak their Heart, that their Heart may indite that which is the Matter of their Desires.

There is this third Disadvantage that a Christian hath by entertaining his predominant Lust, and it is this, It doth exceedingly interrupt a Christian's Motion unto Heaven : How far have you gone these many Days, or these many Years ? The Motion of Christians is retrograde in these Days, they go backward, but do not go on from Strength to Strength. O ! that we might give Obedience to that Command, which is, Heb. 12. 3. *Let us lay aside every Weight, and the Sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us ;* more Mortification would make more Motion towards Heaven than we do attain to.

There is this fourth Disadvantage that a Christian hath by intertaining his predominant Lusts, and it is this, That when a predominant Lust is not mortified, then any Corruption that is within you, will easily be discovered in the Day of Trial ; the Lord oft-times taketh that Revenge upon many, that because they would not mortifie at Home, he will write their Iniquities in legible Letters upon their Fore-heads, that those that run may read them ; And if Christians believed this more, that God may be provoked to write your Lusts that are not mortified, in capital Letters upon your Fore-head, it might provoke you more to be in this Exercise : This is clear, *Ezek. 16. 36.* compared with 37. *Verse*, where their entertaining of their Idols is threatned with this Curse, *that he will discover their Nakedness, and make the Shame thereof to appear.*

There is this fifth Disadvantage that a Christian hath by it, and it is this, That in the Day when he shall be passing

passing thorow the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and shall be looking long and endless Eternity in the Face, then a predominant Lust unmortified will be ill Company, and will raise a Storm within the Conscience, which will not easily be appeased: There are not many of us fit for Eternity, neither do we live, as though we were daily to die. If you would walk with Peace thorow the first and second Gates of Death, study the Mortification of your Lusts. O! but at the singing of that triumphant Song, *O Death, where is thy Sting? and O Grave, where is thy Victory?* Shall not the Soul be fraughted with divine Consolation and unspeakable Joy?

There is this last Disadvantage that waits upon the Christian, and it is this, That such a one doth exceedingly mar all the Performances which he goeth about, and (as it were) leaveth a Print of his Hands upon these most holy and excellent Duties. A Christian who hath a predominant Lust, and is not studying to mortifie it, his Gifts pray more than his Graces: As likewise, he is more in seeking the Approbation of Men, than the Praise of God: A Christian that doth not study to mortifie his Lusts, he is more in seeking the Ornaments of Christianity, than the Substance of it: I think the Vitals and Essentials of Christianity are much exhausted and spent; and there are some few Bones left, rather the Picture and Anatomy of a Christian, than really such a one: As likewise there is this, One who doth not study to mortifie his predominant Lusts, he will not make Conscience of obeying the Commandment of Faith; And this likewise waits on him, much Hardness and Impenitency of Heart: O! but oft-times through the Deceitfulness of Sin, our Heart becometh as a Stone within us, and we are delivered into the Hands of our Iniquities.

Now that which, *Secondly*, We shall speak to, upon the Mortification of predominant Lusts, shall be this,

Spiritual Warfare.

What is that profound Subtilty and desperate Deceitfulness that Satan useth, in tempting People to the Acting of their predominant Lusts? We have six thousand Years Experience, that he is a Liar, and a Murderer from the Beginning, though we believe the Flatteries of Sin, as though our Iniquities were of good Report, and of known Integrity that never did deceive: And we conceive, That Satan's Subtilty doth appear in these; *First*, His Subtilty doth appear in his, That ordinarily when a Christian, or any, is in a most secure or presumptuous Frame, then Satan acts and tempts a Christian to the Acting of his predominant Lust, when Christ is away, then he doth assail; this is most clearly pointed at, *Luke 22. 31.* compared with 33. Verse, where Christ saith to Peter, *Satan hath desired to sift you as Wheat*; and if ye will read the 33. Verse, ye will behold Peter's Frame, that he was in a high String of Presumption, *though all Men should forsake thee, yet I will not do it*: As likewise it is clear from *2 Sam. 11. 2.* where when David was lying upon his Bed, and walking upon the Roof of his House, then he is tempted to the Acting of the Sin of Uncleanness: Satan studieth to catch his Advantage, especially at that Time, when we are most prone to embrace, and most unapt to resist; therefore it should be a Christian's Endeavour to exercise Watchfulness, and to stand upon his Watch-tower.

There is this, *Secondly*, Wherein his Subtilty doth appear. That ordinarily he doth propose the imaginary Advantage of embracing of such a Lust, and doth affect our Affections with the Pleasure of it, but doth not make Mention of the Disadvantage and infinite Hurts that doth appear and come from such a Lust: This was clear in his first Temptation with our first Father, he makes Mention of this, *If thou eat of the forbidden Fruit, thou shalt be as God*, but no Mention made of this, that he should be a Sinner; and most clearly in *Matth. 4. 8.* Where Satan sheweth unto that holy and spotless

One all the Kingdoms of the World, with the Glory of them, and these Things he promised to give Christ, and shewed him the Glory of the Kingdoms of the World, but did not shew to him the Vexation and Toil of these Kingdoms; and no doubt, the one is much more than the other: The Hook wherewith he studieth to take us, is varnished over with the Bait of imaginary Dignity, with transient Pleasures, and with passing Vanities. O! that we were wise as Serpents to know the Depths of Satan, that we might not be ensnared, nor taken by Enticements.

There is this, *Thirdly*, Wherein it appeareth, That ordinarily he studieth either to extenuate the Sinfulness of Sin, that a Christian may be brought to call this but a *Zoar*; or else he studieth to prove the Consistency betwixt such a Sin, and the Reality of the Grace of God: And when once a Christian is brought to such a Length, as to debate the Reality of the Grace of God's Consistency with the Acting of such a Lust, they are near a Fall; for then they cry forth, *Master, pardon me, when I shall bow my Knee in the House of Rimmon, and when my Master leaneth upon my Hand*: They then take an Indulgence, and a Latitude to themselves, to commit that Iniquity.

There is this, *Fourthly*, Wherein his Subtily doth appear, That oft-times he will restrain the Temptations to the acting of your predominant Lusts, and withdraw the Objects of them, that either you may be put off your Watch, or which is more ordinary, that Lusts may take Life, when the Object of Lust is withdrawn: And that is most certain, That Lust oft-times groweth most, when there are fewest Temptations to assail it; for upon the Absence of our Idols, our Love to these Things doth increase; a lusty *Amnon* will wax lean every Day, when he wants the Object whereupon to feed.

There is this, *Fifthly*, Wherein his Subtily doth evidently

nently appear, That ordinarily he will tempt People to the acting of these Sins that are introductive, and bring on the acting of their predominant Lusts: He will tempt one that is given to Uncleanneſs, to Pride, Idleneſs, Fulneſs of Bread: And certainly, one who is given to the Evil of Pride, he will tempt him to the ſmaller Actings of theſe Sins, that ſo he may aſcend by Degrees: He will ſtudy to ſeize upon the Out-ſorts Soul, that ſo he may gain the Affections: He will break the Covenant that we have made with our Eyes, that ſo we may break the Covenant that we have made with our Heart.

There is this, *Laſtly*, Wherein his Subtility doth appear, That ordinarily he will tempt People to the acting of their predominant Luſt under the Vail of Virtue, and Things commendable, as, he will tempt one to Covetouſneſs upon this Account, that they may be capacitate to be charitable to the Poor, and may be uſeful to thoſe who want in their Generation: He will tempt one to Sin, as is clear, *Rom. 3. 6.* that the Grace of Chriſt may be more conſpicuous in pardon- ing them: He tempted Chriſt to Preſumption under the Vail of Faith: As is clear, *Mat. 4. 6.* *If thou be the Son of God, caſt thy ſelf down,* and the Ground he giveth is, *For it is written, He ſhall give his Angels Charge concerning thee, &c.* And likewiſe he tempts many to the Acting of Miſbelief, under the Vail of Humility, Knowledge, and diſtin& Apprehenſions of God.

That which; *Thirdly*, We ſhall ſpeak to, ſhall be, to give you ſome Evidences whether or not ye have attained unto the Mortification of your predominant Luſts, and whether indeed ye have ſung a Song of Triumph over them; and having ſpoken ſomewhat of this before, we ſhall not inſiſt much upon it: Only we would ſay theſe three Things, 1. That a Chriſtian that can reflect upon Luſts, which he ſuppoſeth to be mortified, with Delight and Want of the Exerciſe of Grief,

Grief, may suspect the Reality of this Mortification. O! but one that can meditate upon his predominant Lust, which he supposed was mortified, and yet not be constrained to cover himself with Ashes, and to put Sackcloth upon his Loins, may cry forth, *Miserere mei, Have pity on me.*

And there is this second Evidence: that your predominant Lust is not mortified, when ye are not sedulous, and careful to eschew all Things that lead unto the Acting of that predominant Sin: If ye be not giving Obedience unto that Command, 1 Thes. 5. 22. *Abstain from all appearances of Evil*, you may question the Reality of your Mortification. It is an excellent Practice of a Christian, to be as much under the Impression of the Sinfulness of predominant Lust and Sin after it is mortified, and to be as much in pursuing it, as when it is in its vigorous Exercise and Life with you.

And, there is this, *Lastly*, Which may evidence it, and it is, When one can upon suitable and convenient Occasions of Acting such a predominant Sin, have their Lust set on Fire, and endeavour to act it, they may question the Reality of their Mortification. I know the great Bond which restraineth many from the Acting of their predominant Lust, is not the Apprehension of the *Holiness of God*, but the Want of Secrecy: O! but if we had Secrecy, we would not mourn much for these Sins which we commit in secret, neither would we be much in desisting from the Acting of these Things, unto which our Lust doth lead us. It was certainly a commendable Practice of one, who being tempted unto the Sin of Uncleanness, did condescend to satisfy the Desire of one that did pursue her, upon this Condition, that he would bring her unto a Place where Nothing should behold her; which he attempting to do, and bringing her to the most retired imaginable Place, she then most piously uttered forth these Words, *Doth not God behold us?* which

which Words had influence upon him to whom they were spoken, that he desisted from further prosecuting such woful and carnal Designs. O! but the Apprehension of the Omniscience of God, would keep us much to the crucifying of our most predominant Lust.

We shall shut up our Discourse at this Time; only we shall say a little unto those who are guilty of that predominant Lust of *Covetousness*, which we conceive, is not only a predominant Lust, but an universal Lust. *Sin* is an universal King over the most absolute Monarch, and over every one that sits upon the Dung-hill. And we conceive, That *Covetousness* is one of *Sins* greatest Princes, acting under this absolute Monarch, and having many Subject. And we would only propose these Things, by which you may be helped to mortifie such a Lust and Idol, O! meditate much upon the Disadvantages attending this Idol of *Covetousness*; we conceive the Disadvantages thereof are clearly pointed forth, *1 Tim. 6. 9, 10.* where the Apostle *Paul* enumerateth four Disadvantages of that Sin of *Covetousness*, 1. That it is that which maketh People erre from the Faith. 2. It drowneth them in Destruction and Perdition. 3. It is the Root of all Evil. And Lastly, It pierceth them through with many Sorrows. And for those whose god is the World, we would only propose this Consideration to them, which we conceive hath most influence upon such; be perswaded of this, That *Covetousness* will abbreviate and shorten your Life, as is clear, *Jam. 5. 3.* where this is one Property of this Idol of *Covetousness*, that it shall eat up your Flesh as it were Fire. It is not an unsensible cutting short of your Life, but most sensibly it will abbreviate, and bring you in the midst of your Days to your long and everlasting Home. And there is this Disadvantage of it also, That *Covetousness* is that Sin which doth most directly commit a Breach of the first Command, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me*, as is clear, *Col. 3. 5.* where this Sin of *Covetousness*

ousness is called Idolatry, and covetousness which is Idolatry. And certainly, what are those Things that you pursue after, but white and yellow Dust, and glistening Clay? The Excellency of which we conceive, doth consist as much (in the Estimation of Men) in the Rarity of these Things, as in any intrinsical and internal Worth and Excellency : And how contemptible a Thing Riches and the World is, doth not this speak it, That when there is Abundance of these Things, they become contemptible? as is clear from that Word, *That Solomon made Silver as Stones in the Streets of Jerusalem*, which doth not only speak out this, the Abundance of these Things in his Days, but likewise it speaketh forth this, That Abundance of these Things maketh them contemptible, and moveth us to undervalue them : And that which Solomon hath, *Prov. 23. 5. why settest thou thy Heart on that which is not, for Riches take to themselves Wings and fly away*: Ere long the World shall either leave you, or you shall leave the World.

Now we shall desire to shut up our Discourse with this, That ye would seriously intend the Mortification of your Lusts, and that ye would be much in the Imployment of the Spirit of Christ : Christ hath killed the damning Power of Sin, and hath promised to us the Spirit of Mortification, by which we may kill the Dominion of Sin : And certainly, a Christian ought to act so in Dependence upon the Spirit of Christ, as if they were meer Patients and Instruments under his Hand : But withall we conceive, That in Respect of Activity and Endeavours, a Christian ought to act so, as if he acted independently from him, and did act all himself, but withall in Respect of Self-denial, he ought so to act, as if he acted Nothing at all, but the Spirit acted alone in him, and therefore should cry forth, after he hath done all, *That he is but an unprofitable Servant* ; O ! that ye would be perswaded seriously to ponder

ponder and ballance these Things, that except ye be the Ruin of your Iniquities, Iniquity shall certainly be your Ruin; and ye knew not how long it is unto that Day, when that Decree shall be past in Heaven against you, *They are joined to their Idols, let them alone.* I shall only say that Word which John hath in his Epistle, 5. last, *Little Children keep your selves from Idols.*

S E R M O N VI.

Gal. 5. 24. *And they that are Christ's, have crucified the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts.*

IT is an unchangeable and unalterable Decree of Heaven which cannot be repealed, *That the Wages of Sin is Death, and that which a Man soweth, that shall he also reap:* Though we conceive, there are many that are possessed with this imaginary Delusion, *That though they add Drunkenness to Thirst, and do daily taste of that forbidden Fruit, yet at last they shall obtain a Place to walk in, amongst those that stand by:* They conceive, That there is a possible Union of pure Religion and undefiled, and the Want of Mortification: Though we think, That Religion without Mortification, is Nothing else but the Mortification of Religion, and the crucifying of Christ afresh. Are there not many here, Who instead of *travailing in Birth, until Christ be formed in them,* are travailing in Birth, till they bring forth Iniquity, and till the Image of that old Man be fully framed in them. Now there is this that we would have you know, and wish, That it were engraven upon the fleshly Tables of your Heart, as with a Pen of Iron, and the Point of a Diamond, that there are two Tribunals upon which God doth sit to judge: There is a Tribunal of Justice, where all the Sentences past, are pure, unmixed Wrath, without all Temperament or Mixture

Mixture of Mercy : And before this Tribunal, all Flesh must once appear, and receive that dreadful Sentence of eternal Separation from the Majesty of the Lord, and, if you do well, you must say, *Amen* unto the Equity of the Sentence : But know this for your Consolation, That this is not his last Word ; know that that Justice-court is but subordinate, and there is another higher, unto which we may appeal, to have that Sentence of Justice sweetly repealed. And is not this one mysterious Depth of infinite Love, That *Grace* should declare them righteous, whom Justice hath condemned, and yet leave no Imputation upon the Justice of God ? That *Love* should sweetly reduce Decrees of Justice, and declare them in Law to be void and null ? This is the Law of Love. And is not this a Mystery of infinite Love, That that which is an Abomination for Man, *to justify the wicked*, should be Love and Justice in God *to justify the ungodly* ? And is not this a Wonder, That though there be no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, yet there should be many Things condemnable in them, and that divine Love should make such an Abstraction, as to make a Separation betwixt many Things that are condemnable, and Condemnation ? *Justice and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne*, yet Mercy and Truth go before it, and cometh nearest Sinners, to make ready their Way, that they may speak with Justice. There is this that we would have you know, That in the Accomplishment of this Work of Mortification, (of which we have been speaking at many Occasions) a Christian hath that same Power communicable unto him for the overcoming of his Temptations, which Christ had in the overcoming of Principalities and Powers : This is clear, *Eph. 1. 20*. And certainly, sometimes when a Christian doth reflect upon those living and strong Corruptions that are within him, he will have much of that Fear which *Elisba's* servant had, who cried out, *Master what shall we do ?*

But

But if our Eyes were opened, we should see that there are more for us, nor against us: Put on much of that divine Generosity of *Nehemiah* (if we may allude unto it in this Combate of Faith) *Should such a one as I flee?* However, keep a Midst betwixt Discouragement, and anxious Misbelief: And I would only give Christians, who are indeed engaged in this holy Warfare, that Counsel which *Ahab* gave to *Ben-hadad*, *1 Kings 20. 11.* *Let not him that putteth on his Armour, boast as he that putteth it off,* let confident Faith be mixed with holy Fear, that there may be a sweet Mixture of these two. And there is this which we would speak to you, That there is a Difference betwixt the Grant and Gift of Pardon, and the Intimation of Pardon unto a Christian; yea more, there is a Difference betwixt the Intimation of Pardon, even for a Sin mortified and repented for, and the divine Application of it: This is clear by comparing *2 Sam. 12. 13.* with *Psal. 51.* where *Nathan* saith to *David*, *Thine Iniquities are blotted out, and thy Sin is taken away.* There is both the Grant of Pardon, and the Intimation of it, and yet he himself, *Psal. 51.* prayeth for the Application of Pardon: Pardon was not applied, though it was intimated: And this would speak this to us, That we would not always conclude from the Want of the sensible Convictions of Pardon, the Want of the Grant of Pardon.

But now to come to that at which we left, at the last Occasion, which was the Extent of Mortification, That a Christian ought not only to mortifie original Sin, but his predominant Lusts also, with all the Motions and Occasions unto the Acting of these Sins. Concerning the Mortification of original Sin, which is here called *the Flesh*, we have spoken already, and have spoken somewhat concerning the Mortification of predominant Lusts and presumptuous Sins: It is turned now to be an improper Expression, to make Mention of

of a predominant Grace, that should stand in Opposition to predominant Lusts: I would only say this, That under the Law there is no express Mention made for any Sacrifice for presumptuous Sins, unto which the Apostle doth allude, Heb. 10. 26. *If a Man sin wilfully after he hath received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin.* And certainly this may make us astonished to entertain our predominant Sins, and our presumptuous Iniquities, to entertain them so, as not to debate and wrestle with them, for they turn not unto presumptuous Sins, except we go such a Length: Therefore we should be much in presenting that Supplication, Psal. 19. 13. *Keep back thy Servant from presumptuous Sins, let them not have Dominion over me.*

Now that which we shall speak to, *First*, Shall be this, What are the most effectual and spiritual Means by which a Christian may be helped to the mortifying of his predominant Lusts? And before we speak of them, we shall only say this, That this Generation desireth rather to know what to do, than to do and practise what they know: We think to win to Heaven by Knowledge, though we confess we will not win to Heaven without it, yet there is more requisite in a Christian.

The first Way how a Christian will be helped to mortifie his predominant Lusts, is this, For a Christian to be much in the Exercise of secret Prayer. And I would say this, He is a blessed Christian who ever won to the Mortification of the least Strength of a Lust by publick Prayer, whether more publick, or in Families, or with Society. Pride and Self-seeking is that Caterpillar and Worm that eats up the Fruit of these Addresses unto God; but if you were much in secret prayer alone, it would be a compendious Way to attain to the Mortification of your Lusts, that when a Messenger of Satan buffers you, ye may go to the Throne

Throne thrice, and beseech the Lord, that this Evil may depart from you; this is clear, not only Eph. 6. 18. where amongst all the rest of the spiritual Armour of a Christian, Prayer is made Mention of, *Prayer with all Prayer, and Manner of Supplication*: It is clear Jam. 5. 17. *If any Man be afflicted let him pray*. And 2 Cor. 12. 7, 8. the Words that we were speaking just now O! whither is that *Washing of our Bed with Tears*, and that Presenting of Supplications with Sighs and Groans that can be expressed now gone? There are few Christians but can make Language of their Grief, whose Grief of Heart goes never to such a Length, as they may cry forth, *I am so troubled that I cannot speak*. He were indeed a Phenix of this Time, who could without lying to the Holy Ghost, say, That his Bones were waxing old through his Roring all the Day, and we would only say to such that are not endeavouring after this, You shall go down to your Graves, having your Bones full of the Sins of your Youth.

There is this second Mean that we would speak to That a Christian would be much in the Exercise of the Grace of Watchfulness; this is clear from Luke 21. near the Close, and from Mat. 26. 41. *Watch and Pray, lest ye enter into Temptation*. And certainly, Watchfulness is a most requisite Piece of Armour, that *after we have done all, we may stand*; not only because Watchfulness is that which discovereth unto a Christian his Weakness and Inability; for a Christian to be convinced of this, it is his Strength, as is clear from 2 Cor. 10. 12. *When I am weak, then am I strong*: This is a Paradox to Nature, but no Mystery to Grace; but also because Watchfulness is a most effectual Mean to discover to a Christian, the Subtlety and profound Deceitfulness of his Adversaries, which maketh him to be much in Watching over his own Heart: Watchfulness likewise is that Grace, which discovereth unto a Christian the formal and remiss Actings of Grace in this precious

Combate

Combate: When Faith beginneth to die, and Hope be-
 ginneth to languish, and Love and Zeal begin to
 wax cold, then Watchfulness giveth warning to Pray-
 er, that it may go to seek Strength for those that were
 languishing: As likewise Watchfulness is requisite,
 because it discovereth unto a Christian the first Mo-
 tions of his Adversaries, and when first he beginneth
 to stir, which no doubt, is a great Advantage. And
 more, Watchfulness discovereth unto a Christian that
 Advantage which he hath over his Lusts, which doth
 exceedingly encourage him to go on in this spiritual
 Warfare.

There is this, *Thirdly*, Which is requisite, That a
 Christian would be much in the Meditation upon the
 sufferings, Death, and Love of Jesus Christ. I know
 not (to a tender Christian) a more effectual Mean to
 mortifie his Affections and Lusts, than this, this is clear
 that it is so, not only from 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. where Paul
 writ, *The Love of Christ did constrain him, because we thus
 judge, That if one died for all, then were all dead, and that
 we should henceforth no more live to ourselves.* And Peter press-
 eth this, 1 Pet. 1. 18. compared with ver. 30. *Be ye
 holy as he is holy:* And he subjoineth the Reason of it,
*for ye are bought with a Price, even with the incorruptible
 blood of Jesus Christ:* And, 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2. he presseth the
 Doctrine of Mortification from this, *That Christ was
 crucified in the Flesh:* And it is clear from Psal. 26.
*where the great Argument which perswaded David
 to pursue after Sincerity, was this, for the Love of God
 always before my Eyes.* And is not this a sweet Portrai-
 ure, always to contemplate and behold, to look upon
 Love until ye be changed into that same Image from Glory to
 glory. And certainly Christ's Death and Love must have
 most effectual influence upon this: Can one read
 these Words, *He sweat Drops of Blood;* and that Word, *If
 be possible, let this Cup depart from me:* Can you read
 these Words, and not be provoked to hate Sin with a
 perfect

perfect Hatred? Can ye love that which crucified
Christ, and brought him so low? If such a Suppositi-
on had been possible, That all that were Sinners had
been standing round about the Cross, in the Day that
Christ was hanged up betwixt Heaven and Earth, in
the Day that his precious Body was dropping down
Drops of Blood, might not ye have said, O! what
Thing must that be, which we call Sin, that hath brought
him so low? And may not the reflex Thoughts upon
the Love of Christ, provoke you to this, That if Christ
hath so far condescended unto you, ought not ye to
please him, and give Obedience to his Command-
ments? Who would dispute the Commands of such
One? And it is certain, That if ye would meditate
on these Things till ye wondred, and wonder till
ye loved, no doubt it should perswade you to be en-
deavouring Mortification of your Lusts. Christ's Death
had not only a moral Influence (of which we have
spoken) but it hath a physical Influence also upon the
Mortification of Sin: For we are bought (saith the A-
postle Peter, 1 Pet. 1. 20. with a Price from our vain Con-
versation: Christ hath crucified the damning Power
of Sin, and hath purchased this Gift, the Spirit of
Sanctification, to crucifie the Dominion of Sin.

There is this, fourthly, Which is requisite, That
Christian under Debates with Lusts, be much in the
Exercise of the Grace of Faith; It is a most insensible
and unknown Help to our Apprehension: We think Faith
is a Help, when all Things are desperate; and there-
fore, we judge Prayer a more suitable Help to Search
and Apprehension; therefore a Christian under the
prevailing of his Corruptions, will be more in the
Employment of the Grace of Prayer, than in the Em-
ployment of the Grace of Faith: Though we may
bring this to the Advantage of the Grace of Faith, that it hath
a most effectual and most divine Influence for the
crucifying of Lusts: If so we may speak, Faith is the

that cometh nearest himself; for Faith (as it is spoken of it) hath a Kind of Omnipotency, as it is said, *All Things are possible for those that believe.* Now this is clear, not only from 1 John 5. 5. *This is our Victory whereby we overcome the World, even our Faith:* And it is clear, from Eph. 6. 16. *Above all Things, take ye the Shield of Faith, by which you may be able to quench the fiery Darts of the Devil.* And certainly, Had we so much Faith as a Grain of Mustard-seed, we might say to every Mountain that is in our Way, *Be removed, and hurled into the midst of the Sea, and it should obey us.* We shall clear the Influence of Faith in the mortifying of Corruption, not only in this, That the Grace of Faith discovereth unto a Christian, that super-eminent and precious Excellency of Jesus Christ, at the Appearance of which, the Glory and Luster of our Idols do disappear. We think our Idols are like Stars, that in the Night do appear and seem beautiful Creatures; but when once that Sun, even the Sun of Righteousness doth arise, then their Glory is not seen, neither can they be beheld. Saw you never such a Sight of him, that constrained you to cry forth, *What have I to do any more with Idols:* If such a Supposition were possible, that any Idol should get Entrance above, it should get no Entertainment there, for they are upheld by an infinite Strength that cannot fail: As likewise, the Influence of Faith may be cleared in this, That it is that Grace that doth lay hold upon the Promises, by which, and thorough which, Strength from the Head is conveyed unto the combatant. As for Example, when a Believer is wrestling with his Lusts, Faith layeth hold upon the Promise of Help, and by it layeth hold on Jesus Christ, who is the Promiser. As likewise, the Influence of Faith may be cleared in this, Faith is that Grace which discovereth to a Christian that Crown and Recompence of Reward, one Sight and View of which maketh Love and Zeal take fire, and maketh them to tread upon the high

Places of the Earth, that when the Archers shoot at them, and doth grievously wound them, yet their Bow doth abide in its Strength.

There is this Mean likewise, by which a Christian would mortifie his predominant Lusts, and it is this. That he would be much in entertaining the Grace of Tenderneſs, *Joseph* like to cry forth when Temptation doth assail him, *shall I do this and Sin against God?* I am perswaded, That Sin not resisted in its Motions doth procure Hardneſs: And likewise we may say, That Sin resisted in its Beginnings, doth bring forth the Grace of Tenderneſs in a most effectual and eminent Way.

And there is this Mean likewise which is requisite. That a Christian be much in the Apprehension of Death Judgment and Eternity: These three much meditated upon, would make us afraid to sin. I think a Christian never walketh as he ought, till he walk so, as if each Moment next to that wherein he liveth, he had the Expectation of appearing before the Judgment seat of Christ. O! but it would be a sad Dispensation to many, to have this Day a Summons without Continuation of Days, to appear before that dreadful and terrible Tribunal of Jesus Christ, when the Books shall be opened wherein your Wanderings are written, and the Books of your Conscience shall be opened, that shall say, *Amen* to every Thing that is recorded within the Volume of these Books: This is clear from Acts 17. 30. 31. *He hath commanded all Men every where to repent*, and the Argument enforcing it, is, because *he hath appointed a Day, in which he will judge the World by this Man Jesus Christ*: As likewise it is clear in Eccles. 11. 9. where Solomon presseth by Way of holy Ironie, (for so the Scope is) young Men not to take their Pleasures in the Morning of their Time, because for all these Things God should bring them to Judgment. And we wish that, *remembrance* which did always walk with a holy Man might walk with you, and sound in your Ears, *Awake*

and come to Judgment, that it may be that which may regulate your Walk. I shall not say much, but beware to entertain your Lusts, lest Judgment overtake you, the Stones of the Wall of this House shall bear Witness against you in the Day of the Lord, that ye have been invited to flee from the Wrath to come, and have refused the precious Offers of a crucified Saviour. We would obtest and beseech you, that if there be a Heaven, if there be a God, if there be an Eternity, which are most certain and infallible; if there be a Hell, and everlasting Separation from the Presence of the Lord, and if you have precious and immortal Souls, that you would tender your own Salvation, and speak much of Peter's Divinity. *pity your selves*, for ye are destroying your selves through the want of Knowledge; and if we may say it, Hell is enlarging it self wide, for the receiving of many of the Inhabitants of this place, and of many that live in this Generation, who are destitute and void of the Grace of the living God.

Now that which secondly we shall speak to shall be this, What are the Evidences and Tokens of this, when Lust hath dominion over one? And we shall shortly point out the Evidences of Lust, when it hath Dominion: And we conceive this first may evidence it, when one wins to such a length, as they can commit sin with delight, and with greediness, when it is pleasure to them to go after the Heart of their delectable things, then Sin hath dominion over one: as it is clear, sin hath dominion over those made mention of, 1 Pet. 2: 13. *They account it Pleasure to riot in the Day time, and are sporting themselves with their own lasciviousness: such Fools as Solomon speaketh of, making Mock at sin: and likewise it is clear of those that are made mention of, Eph. 4: 19. They commit Iniquity with greediness, and as the Prophet speaketh in another place, their Hearts are mad upon their idols.*

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There is this, *Secondly*, Which may evidence it, and it is this, When one sinneth with his predominant lust without conviction, or if they be convinced, their convictions do suddenly vanish, like those made mention of, Jer. 6. 15. *Were they ashamed when they had committed Abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed: neither could they blush: They had won to such a length in Impiety, that not only they would not do it, but they could not do it; and that same is made mention of, Jer. 8. 12. It is clear likewise, Jer. 3. 3. Thou hadst a Whores forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed: and from Prov. 30. 20. where the adulterous Woman saith that she hath done no Vickedness. When you are brought unto such a length of Impiety, then know that you have yielded your selves Servants unto unrighteousness for a Time.*

There is this which may evidence it likewise, and it is this, When one can commit iniquity upon small Temptations, yea, upon none at all: this did prove that that Sin of Adultery had some dominion over David, when he did commit it upon so small or no temptation; for this is brought in to aggravate it, 2 Sam. 12. 8. *I gave thee thy Masters Wives into thy Bosom: and this is most emphatically aggravate, vers. 2. 7. one poor Man should have had one Ew-lamb, and yet he had so many, and that yet he should pursue after that: And most clearly, Isa. 5: 18, We unto them that draw Iniquity with Cords of vanity, and Sin as with a Cart-rope: the meaning of these Words we conceive it to be this, that they did most violently without any allurements or enticement, pursue after the Heart of their detestable things: certainly, those may suspect themselves, that upon the first presentation of an idol, they presently bow down their Heads and worship it.*

There is this likewise which may evidence it, and it is this, When one, notwithstanding of the convictions of the omniscience of God that doth behold them in:

will commit such an iniquity : no doubt, then sin is brought unto a most damnable and most atrocious height : then Sin had dominion over *Er*, Gen. 38. 7. *He did evil in the sight of the Lord* : the meaning of which Word we conceive to be this, That he did the evil, notwithstanding he was convinced of the omniscience and all-seeing Eye of God : And it is recorded of *Abab*, 1 King. 21. 20. *He sold himself to commit Iniquity in the sight of the Lord*, when notwithstanding he knew that he had seven eyes that run to and fro through the earth, yet he did yet these abominations.

And there is this, Lastly, That doth evidence it, When one doth sin with much deliberation and advice, they are not over-haled by their Temptations and Lusts, and they sit down in Counsel to consult how such a thing may be effectuate : then had Iniquity dominion over those that are made mention of, Mic. 2. 1. *Wo to them that devise Iniquity upon their Beds*, that sit down deliberately in the silent seasons of the Night, to contrive the mischievous Plots of their Hearts : and we would only say to such, read the 3 or 4 verses, of that Chapter, where God saith in a sweet and just opposition, in regard of their devising of Iniquity ; *Behold (saith he) I will devise against this People* : God will deliberately and with much Indignation, punish those that sin deliberately ; and this is clear from *Jer.* 18. 12.

Now we shall shut up our discourse at this Time, only we would speak a little unto this, Why God doth sometimes think fit to expose his own unto some Dominion of their Lusts ? It was a notable and most true saying of a Heathen, *As many vices, as many Masters*. for every Lust is a Master, and we may say, Every Lust hath a Servant, and some have ten Thousand waiting on. And we conceive, when a Christian beginneth to establish his own Righteousness, then he is in hazard to be given up for a Time, unto the dominion of his sin : this is clear, *Eccl.* 33. 13. If he trust to his own righte-

righteousness, and committiniquity; and there may be this Reason of it, that they may know to distinguish betwixt the Yoke of Christ, and the yoke and bondage of sin, as it is pointed at, *Deut. 28. 47. 48.* And we conceive this may be a reason of it, because God intendeth to magnifie the Glory of his unsearchable Grace by delivering them from the door of the Pit, when this song shall be sung, *This my Son was dead, and is alive, and was lost, and is found*; this is the song of restoring grace, after Grace hath once prevented the Christian.

Now we will desire you seriously to intend this precious Work of Mortification: the most part of us are idol Christians, we have hands, and we do nothing, we have eyes, and we see not, and we have feet, and we walk not: And certainly that practice and maxim of *Matchiavel* is much practised amongst us, he thought it was advantageous to have the Profession of Religion and of Virtue; but he thought it dangerous to have the reality of Religion: there are many that desire to be clothed with the Coat of Christ, that never desired conformity with Christ in the inward Man: And we think if Christ were to come down from Heaven he might preach this to many of us, *Behold I kiss thee, Son of Man with a kiss?* There are many that I am sure have a lower Spirit than Judas, that would sell Christ at a lower rate than thirty pieces of Silver: O! eternity, eternity, what shall ye do in the Day of Desolation when your Visitation shall come from a far? where shall ye flee for help, and where shall you leave your Glory? I shall shut up all that I have to say with this, the Wrath of that living, but contemptible Stone, that was cut out of the Mountains, shall be more intolerable than the weight of Mountains and Hills; therefore the reprobates rather choose to be under the weight of Hills and Mountains, than to be under the weight of this living Corner-stone, but so much despised. Will you not embrace

embrace him? may not Angels laugh at your folly, and have you in holy derision? The triumph is above, and it is not long before his own shall cry forth, *It is finished.* And no doubt, if we were much in the Exercise of Faith, we should easily accomplish this Warfare: we may call Faith *Eliezer*, of whom it is reported that he did so pursue his Enemies, that the People returned to gather up the Spoils. Love, Prayer, and Joy will eternally sit down and reap the sweet Fruits of the victory of Faith. Now to him that can make you overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and the Word of your Testimony, we desire to give praise.

S E R M O N V I I.

Gal. 5. 24. *And they that are Christs have crucified the Flesh with the Affections and lusts.*

IT was a divine Sentence of that Master of Experiences, that *Love covereth a multitude of Sins*: we may say, that precious and infinite Love that Christ hath had to Sinners, *hath covered a multitude of Sins*: though this is a Lamentation, and shall be for a Lamentation, that the most part of us have not come that length of Religion which the Publicans and Sinners did attain to, which is, *to love those that love them.* Doth not Christ in his engraving of his Love to Sinners in Letters of Blood, call for this at our Hand, that we should devote our selves wholly to him? But we confess, such is that desperate enmity and deceitfulness of the Hearts of all Flesh, that if all who have been Partakers of the divine Nature, or shall be partakers of it, had but one Heart to conduct them to Heaven, they would misguide it in the way, it being the matchless and incommunicable prerogative of the *Captain of our Sal-*

vation, to guide many Sons and Daughters to Glory. I think, if there were a Description to be given of the most part of us, we must give that which is, *Prov. 6. 13.* He speaketh with his Feet, and teacheth with his Fingers: And the great Lesson that we would teach with our Feet, and preach with our Hands, would be *Iniquity, Formality, and Distance from God.* And I would have you who are expectants of Heaven, and have some small hope of being eternally with him, to be much in this precious Work of Mortification. There are some so habituate to Sin, (if God do not prevent them) the last act they shall commit in this Stage of the World, shall be an act of Iniquity, and they shall breathe out their last, in departing from that Invisible Majesty. There are some that though they live seventy Years, they shall not have this to say, of one Day of all their Life, that they have devoted and given it to God. Mortification is a mystery to our Knowledge, but much more a Mystery to our Practice: It is a wonder that many of us are not distracted, and that much of *Cains* divinity doth not possess us, that *whoever shall find us by the Way, shall kill us.* However, unto those who make any Conscience of this Duty, we would say these two things, 1. Ye may yield unto the Premises and Assertions of Misbelief, which they draw from the dominion of your Sin over you, but deny the conclusions of Misbelief: This was the practice of *David*, *Psal. 64. 3* There is the assertion of Misbelief in the first Words, *iniquities prevail over me,* but he denies that conclusion which we draw from it, *that we are Reprobates*; but Faith doth sweetly subjoin, *As for our transgressions, thou wilt purge them away.* This is bad Logick to deny the Conclusion, but precious Divinity: And, Secondly, We would say this to you, That ye may with a great deal of liberty, make use of the dominion of your Iniquity, as an Argument to plead with God for Pardon, according to that famous

Prayer

Prayer of David, *Psal. 25. 11. For thy Names sake, O Lord, pardon mine Iniquity, for it is great.* And we would say likewise, That God maketh use of the Iniquities of the children of Men, as an Argument to provoke himself unto Mercy, and even those Iniquities, which before he hath made use of as an Argument of Justice. It is strange to parallel and compare these two places, *Gen. 6. 5.* with *Gen. 8. 21.* where the Reason that God giveth of the destruction of the World is this, *Because that every imagination of the thoughts of the Heart of Man, is only evil continually:* and yet *Chap. 8. 21.* he giveth this as a ground, why he would curse the World no more for Mans sake, because, saith he, *The imagination of Mans Heart is evil from his Youth.*

Now we told you at the last occasion we spoke on these Words, when we were speaking upon the second thing of Mortification, which was the Extent of it, that a Christian should not only mortifie original Sin, which is here called *Flesh*, but likewise, he should mortifie his predominant Idols, which are here called *Affections*, and of these two we have spoken. There is this likewise in the extent of Mortification, That a Christian should mortifie the first Motions and Temptations unto Sin, which are here called *Lusts*. And for clearing what we shall speak unto this; we conceive that the first motions of Sin do comprehend these two, *First*, That a Christian should study to mortifie the first Temptations he meets with unto acting, or embracing of any particular Lust. And *Secondly*, That a Christian should study to avoid all appearance of Evil, by which he may be brought to the actings of that Sin. We shall not stand long to prove that it is the Duty of a Christian to do the first; it is clear not only from *Jam. 4. 7.* where we are commanded to *resist the Devil*, which comprehendeth even the resisting of the first motions of Sin, as likewise from *1 Pet. 5. 9. Whom resist, stedfast in the faith,* but likewise it is clear from the practice of David, *Prayer*

Psal. 56. 3: where when misbelief began to stir, he put faith in exercise, *What Time* (saith he) *I am afraid, I will trust in thee.* And it is clear from the practice of *Paul, 2 Cor. 12. 7.* where there was a Messenger of Satan given to buffet him, he went and beseeched the Lord thrice. Neither shall we stand to prove, that it is the duty of a Christian to flee the appearances of evil.

It is clear not only from *Deut. 12. 30.* where it is said, *Thou shalt not enquire how the Nations serve their gods:* ye may suppose there was no iniquitie in this inquiry, yet because it was the appearance of evil, God did forbid it: as likewise from *Deut. 25. 13, 14.* *Thou shalt not have in thy bag diverse weights, a great and a small; thou shalt not have in thine house diverse Measures, a great and a small:* It might be supposed, that the having of these things when not used, was not unlawful; but the very having of them, because it was an appearance of evil, it was desired to be eschewed; and that remarkable Place, *Prov. 5. 8.* *Come not nigh the door of her house, who is a whore;* and that in *Deut. 12. 30* where the people are commanded, even to forget the names of Idols. And from *Jude 21.* *To hate the garment spotted with the flesh:* and *Deut. 16. 19* where it is forbidden for a Judge to take a Gift, not that there is iniquity in this, but because it is an appearance of evil, lest he should pervert judgment, it is forbidden.

Now that which first we shall speak to upon this, that a Christian should flee the first motions and appearances of sin, shall be this, to propose some considerations unto you, that you may inforce this duty more.

The first consideration that we propose is this, That iniquity when it is resisted in its first motions, it is most easily conquered and overcome; when sin is killed in its Birth, it is killed with the greatest facility and easiness: and certainly, when we delay the mortify

ing of our lusts, and resist not the Devil, it is no wonder that we are led captive by the hand of our iniquities: It was an ancient saying worthy to be practised, Resist the beginning of evil, for the remedy is ever more difficult in the Close, than in the Beginning, However, we would give Christians these two directions for this Consideration, 1. After, by the power of Grace, ye have overcome the first motions of Sin, do not give over your Watch, nor sit down in carnal confidence, for he will again assail you, even after you have overcome: It is a remarkable Word that is annexed to the close of *Christ's* Temptations, *Luke 4. 13.* where, after Satan was foiled most remarkably, it is said, *he departed from him for a Season*; he had a mind to return, though he was overcome. 2. We say this, that most ordinarily the resisting of the motions of Sin, and overcoming of them, if they be not improved with Humility, it is the fore-runner of some sad stroke from the Hand of the Lord.

There is this second consideration, that we would propose for inviting of you to resist the first motions of sin, and it is this, a Christian that maketh conscience of this duty, ordinarily he is blessed with most divine and precious enjoyments of *Jesus Christ*: let a Christian try this by Experience, and when first sin doth assail them, if they will make conscience to resist it, the dew of Heaven shall come down and ly upon their branch, that their Glory may be fresh in them, and they shall be constrained to set up an *Ebenizer* unto God, and to cry forth, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us*; this is clear, *Rom. 8. 13.* *If ye through the Spirit shall mortifie the deeds of the Flesh, ye shall live*; and clear likewise from *Rev. 2. 17.* Where, to the Man that is in the way of overcoming, *Christ will give him the hidden Manna*: And certainly, we think, if we may make allusion to these Words, that Curse is accomplished in these days, *I will make the Heavens Brass, and the*

earth iron. There are some upon whom it hath not rained these three Years and six Months, but are become as the bottle in the smoke, the Marrow of whose Bones is consumed.

There is this third Consideration that we would propose, and it is this, That the resisting of the Motions, and first stirrings of Corruption, is the way to get the Soul under a divine Impression of the sinfulness of Sin: when was it that the Apostle Paul cried forth, *O wretched Man that I am?* was it not, when there was a Law in his Mind, wrestling against the Law of his Members? When he was the greatest Wrestler, then did Sin appear out of measure sinful unto him. I confess, that Distinction which Papists do so much adore, of *venial and mortal Sins*, I think Christians in their Practice do make much use of. Are there not many Sins, which ye account venial, and write this Name upon their Fore-head, this is a *Zoar*, a little thing, and ye desire to be pardoned, when ye bow your Knee in the House of Rimmon, if ye go no further: But certainly, the Way to bring the Soul to a divine loathing of all Sin, is to be resisting the first motions of it.

There is this first Consideration, that resisting of the first Motions of Sin, is that which keeps the Grace of Faith much in exercise, especially in an hour of Trial and of Temptation: I think there is nothing that will darken a Christians Evidence so much as this, the conviction of this, that there was never a Sin did assail them, that was resisted in its first Motions and stirrings. I confess, I think a bad Conscience, it's the Mother of Misbelief, which the Apostle doth clearly point at, *1 Tim. 3. 9. Holding* (saith he) *the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience*, as if he would have said, that divine and precious Guest Faith can lodge in no dwelling, but a pure and undefiled Conscience: And to make this clear, that the resisting of the Motions and first

first stirrings of Sin, have influence to preserve Faith in Exercise, see Rev. 2. 17. *To him that overcometh, that is in the way of overcoming, I will give him a new Name; he shall know that his Name is written in these precious Records of Heaven, and that before the morning stars did sing for joy, ere ever the Corner-stone of the World was laid, he was engraven upon the Heart of precious ones, in indelible Letters which cannot be blotted out: As also it is clear from Rom. 7. compared with 8. and 1. verse: when was it that Paul cried forth, There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus? was it not then, when he was wrestling against Corruptions.*

And there is this last Consideration, which we shall propose to enforce this Duty, and it is this, That not resisting sin in its first Motions, do ordinarily create and bring to pass much hardness and stupidity of heart, when we silence our Convictions with Laziness, and answer our reprover with this, *I have put off my Coat, how shall I put it on?* I shall say to such, it as a bad Omen, and Sign, that God is upon his way to cease to be such a reprover unto you. I confess, there is a difference betwixt sinning against Light, and sinning with Light: and we conceive that there are many guilty of the one, that are not guilty of the other: However, if ever ye shall come this length, as when Temptation doth assail you, to make a Covenant of Peace and Agreement with it, ye may expect; if you go to heaven, you shall be safe, but so as by fire: And we confess, there are some whose Consciences may bear them record, that they never knew what it was to resist the first Motions and stirrings of corruption. It is a lesson of so high a nature, that it would need explication unto them; and think ye that ye can attain unto that living and precious hope, who never knew to wrestle with Sin, and with your Corruptions? Is such a delusion as this among you, that ye can reign, though ye fight not,

not, and triumph though ye contend not? ye may reign to your own Apprehension, as Kings without Christ this way, but shall never reign as Kings with him, if ye do not study to mortifie your lusts.

That which secondly we shall speak upon this, shall be this, what is the Reason that Christians do not resist Sin in its first motions and stirrings of Sin within them? And we conceive, that it doth either proceed from this, that Christians are not much in the Exercise of the Grace of Watchfulness, I think Temptations seize oft-times upon a Christians Affections before they be aware, hence it is, that when the Apostle Peter is prescribing this direction of resisting the motions of sin, he requireth this, as an antecedent Duty, that they should be watchful, 1 Pet. 5, 8, 9. *Be vigilant*, and then, *resist him, steadfast in the Faith*: when once a Christian hath given over his Watch, he is a prey unto his Lusts: we may certainly say of him, that he is a City broken down and without Walls, that doth not exercise the grace of Watchfulness. Or else it doth proceed from this, That Christians are not in a Divine and Spiritual Frame to resist Temptations, when they are first assailed with them. We confess, our Spirits oft-times are so loaded with the Pleasures of a World, and are so much taken up with the passing delights of a transient World, that when Temptations do come; we do easily condescend to embrace them: hence it is that the Apostle James, when he is passing this Exhortation upon these to whom he writeth, *resist the Devil*, he subjoineth this in the 9. verse as a concomitant Duty, *draw near to God*, as if he would have said, If Temptations find you at a distance with God, then ye may cry forth, *have pity on me*; for ye are a Prey, if ye be not found within sight of him, and if your Hearts do not study to walk in the sight of his precious Face, As likewise Peter doth prescribe this, 1 Pet. 9. 8, 9. *Be sober*, and then, *resist him steadfast*

in the Faith : and more clearly it is pointed at, *Matth.* 26. 41. *Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.* And I would only say this unto you. It is a most high and divine walk always to be living within the sight of God, that when ye go down to the grave, ye may have this to say, I am now to change my place, but not to change my company : heaven may be to you but a precious passing and transition into a more constant and immediate Enjoyment of God ; Or else it doth proceed from this, that Christians when they are first assailed with the Motions and stirrings of Corruptions, they do not do violence to their own flesh. I confess these two Idols, which are dependent one upon another, that Idol of *Self*, and that Idol of *Ease*, they are the cut-throats of a Christians Diligence, and are the great occasion, why we do not overcome, *through the Word of our Testimony, and by the Blood of the Lamb.* Think ye that it is an easie thing to overcome Temptations? I confess, those that are not acquainted with it, may probably say it, but this is certain, that such kind goeth not forth, but by Fasting and Prayer. It cost *Christ* much toil to liberate you from the guilt of sin, and it will cost you much toil to liberate your selves from the filth of Sin. And there is this lastly from which it proceeds, that Christians do not mortifie Sin, in its first Stirrings and Motions, because they are not living under an Impression of the sinfulness of Sin. We conceive, that oft-times when Temptations do assail us, we think, departing from God a dispensible evil, and that which easily we may obtain Pardon for : I would prescribe that unto you, as one of the greatest Mysteries of Christianity, and blessed, blessed is he eternally, that hath win to it, and it is this, to be living constantly under a divine Impression of the sinfulness of sin, that ye may take it up in its Nature, and in its Effects. I think, if one should come from the Dead, having the Chains of everlasting wrath, wreathed

ed about his Feet, and the shekels of the fury of the Lord, wreathed about his Hands, and should preach to you, concerning the nature of Sin, and how damnable a thing it is, there are many who would not take heed much to such Doctrine.

Now that which, *Thirdly*, we proposed to speak to from these Words, was, the difficulty to attain to Mortification, which we conceive, was held forth under that Word, *Crucifie*; which doth import, that Mortification is a longsom Work, as Crucifying was a longsom death: as likewise it doth import, that Mortification was a painful Work, as crucifying was one of the most painful Deaths: And likewise it holdeth forth the intensive Nature of Mortification, that a Christian should study not to be content until he should kill Corruption: And concerning these three we shall speak together: And we shall point out difficulty of attaining to Mortification in these things. Is there not this which points out the difficulty of it, that there is a woful unity of affection betwixt us and our Lusts, they are dear to us as the right Eye, and our right Hand, and right Foot: And I confess to convince you of that Unity that is betwixt you and your Lusts; I think that expression which ordinarily ye use, when one is reprovng you for your Passion, or for your Swearing, may suffice; ye will answer, What aileth you at me? which doth speak this, that you say, your Lusts and you are one. And I confess *Paul* hath an expression like this, *Rom. 7. 8. I know (saith he) that in me dwelleth no good thing.* There are two *Me's* in a Christian; there is a Spiritual and a refined *Me*, there is a carnal and a wicked *Me*, as *Paul* doth distinguish them in that Verse, *I know (saith he) that in me dwelleth no good thing*; and he subjoineth, *In me is will that is present, which is one good thing.* And we confess, that Word is accomplished in *Me*, *They are joined to their Idols, let them alone.*

There

There is that, *Secondly*, which pointeth out the difficulty of Mortification, And it is the strength of those lusts that are within us. We think the Scripture is so abundant in pointing out the strength of Sin, that we need not speak much to it : There is that expression, *Rom. 8. 2.* which is a most strange Word, it is there called *the Law of Sin and of Death*, as it were, Sin pleads for as much subjection from us, as if we were tried by Law to obey it : And in that Verse, there is a sweet contrariety of Laws, *the Law of the Spirit of Life, hath made me free from the Law of Sin and of Death.* If so we may speak, there is, in a manner, one decree and Statute of Heaven, declaring another to be null ; for it was a Law in Heaven, that we should be under Death, because we were under sin, but behold here is a posterior Law that doth sweetly reduce this prior Law, and it is *the Law of the Spirit of Life.* As likewise, that Expression pointeth forth the strength of corruption, which is, *2 Cor. 10. 4.* where he saith, We are to fight for the pulling down of strong holds, as it were, Sin fortifieth it self within our Bosom : and we confess, if this were believed, we should study to mortifie our Corruptions with a great deal of more pains and constancy. There is this likewise, which pointeth it out, and it is the deceitfulness of our Lusts, and the subtilty which they vent in their deceiving of us ; which is clear from that Expression, *Jam. 1. 14. When a Man* (saith he) *is drawn away, and enticed of his Lusts,* the Word there that is rendered *enticed*, is taken from the Fishers, who deceive the silly Fishes with an apparent Bait of pleasure. We confess, these two are the great obstructions of a Christians progress to Heaven, there are Temptations of Fear, and there are Temptations from advantage ; which two, if they were removed, we might with greater facility overcome our Lusts, and sing a Song of Triumph over our Idols : oft-times that Expression is recorded *deceitfulness of Sin* ; we confess.

if

if this were believed, we would use a more divine and holy Prudence, lest we should be ensnared. And to shut up our discourse upon Mortification, upon which we have been speaking so long; we shall only speak a little to obviate any Mistake that may be about the difficulty of any Mortification, which shall include that which we intend to speak upon; which was the certainty of overcoming.

And that which first we would say unto you is this, Be perswaded of this, that there is more divine satisfaction in the resisting of your lusts, and wrestling against them, than there is in the actual Fruition of them all: That Word of Solomons, *Stollen Waters are sweet*, saith the adulterous Woman, but at last they shall be convinced of the contrary: and that Word which he speaketh, *Bread of Deceit is pleasant to the Mouth, but he knoweth not, that the dead are there, &c.* And we think the Apostle sweetly chideth the Romans concerning this thing, *What Fruit have ye of these things, whereof ye are now ashamed?* It is sad to think upon that woful disappointment that many shall meet with.

There is this which we would likewise say, That there is a divine certainty of a Christians overcoming, let the difficulties be never so many. And (O beloved in the Lord) are not these glad Tidings from a far country, and may be as cold Water to a thirsty Mans Soul, that a Christian shall once overcome: And I confess there are these four things, that speak the certainty of a Christians overcoming: *First*, The Faithfulness, and the Love of Jesus Christ is laid in pawn for our overcoming, which is clear from that, *Joh. 6. 39.* And this is the Fathers will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last Day: And we confess this is certain, it is more of Christs Concernment, that a Believer should overcome, than it is of his own: O! what

Songs

Songs to the Faithfulness of Christ, what Songs to his Love shall be sung that day, when the precious Troops of his Saints shall return from the Day of Judgment, and that general Infare shall be of all those that have been begotten unto a living hope, when they shall convey Christ home, through the Ports of the new Jerusalem, every one having the harp of God in his hand, and shall cry forth, *Hallelujah, Hallelujah, to him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* That song shall have no Period though it have a beginning.

There is this likewise which pointeth forth their certainty of overcoming. Christ hath overcome, and therefore a Christian shall overcome. It was the sweet divinity of the Apostle Paul, Heb. 2. 9, 10. there is a promise (saith he) that all things shall be put under our Feet, but we see not that promise accomplished, saith he, I see one thing accomplished, which is a pledge of it, I see Jesus Christ for the suffering of death, crowned with glory, and with Majesty: Christ is in Heaven and he, must be there: and that Word John 16. last, *Be of good cheer, saith he, for I have overcome the World;* which is a pledge and certain token, that ye shall once overcome.

There is this likewise, which pointerb forth their certainty of overcoming, that that same power which was exercised in bringing Christ from death, and in making him to overcome principalities and powers is communicate to believers to make them overcome; as it is clear from Eph. 1, 19, 20. where it is said, *That Power that wrought mightily in Christ to raise him from the Dead, doth also work in those that believe.* O! Christians, Heirs of the Grace of Life, believe this, that omnipotency is ingaged on your behalf; and have you not learned that first point of the Creed, that there is nothing impossible to God; and so when you are constrained sometimes to cry out, *Who shall stand before the children of Anak;* content your selves with this, that there is nothing too hard for him.

And

And there is this, *Lastly*, which points it out, that Divine and invisible knot of Union that is betwixt *Christ* and his Members; Is *Christ* above? the Members must follow: for ye know, though *Christ* be the fulness of the Saints, yet the Saints are the fulness of *Christ*: There is a mutual fulfilling and accomplishing each one of another; know ye not that Word, *That where I am, there they may be also*. I think of all the Words that *Christ* ever spoke to the *Father*, that Word was the most imperious and commanding-like Word which he hath, *Joh. 17. 24. I will (saith he) that those that thou hast given me, be where I am*. It was not his Prayer which came that length, he willed it, and would not be contradicted. And certainly, there is nothing that may comfort you in the hour of Trial so much as this, *Christ* is upon his way to relieve you; and ye are upon your way of overcoming. And I shall only say that Word, which ought to be your Practice; *1 Joh. 5. 18. Whosoever is born of God sinneth not, and that wicked one toucheth him not*; That ordinary expression which you have, you should not rub clothes with him, nor touch him. And to those that are walking in the broad Paths of Sin. I shall only speak that to you which is, *Joh. 21. 20. His Eyes shall see his destruction; and he shall drink of the Wrath of the Almighty*. Your eyes and your Taste shall be satisfied: And that Word which is *vers. 30. He shall be preserved to the Day of Destruction*, or as the Word in the Original, *He shall be reserved to the Day of Wrath*; as it were, there shall be a combination of Wrath, and Justice that shall seize upon you. Now to him who is upon his way, who shall come, and will not tarry, whose reward is with him, we desire to give praise.

S E R M O N V I I I .

Gal. 6. 14. *By whom the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.*

Christianity doth consist in a blessed Exchange of Affections, a Soul dying in its Affections, and respects to all things, that are here below; and living and advancing in its desires towards him, who is that blessed and universal good. It ought to be that Arch-plot, and great Design, that Christiansought to promote, to attain to that original Unity, which once was in Mans affections toward God. O! what blessedness did *Adam* enjoy, while he did stand in that Estate wherein he was created, he having a blessed Harmony of all his Affections towards God, and likewise, there being a most divine Correspondence and blessed Familiarity betwixt Heaven and Earth, betwixt him that sitteth on the Throne, and the Footstool; but that was most eminently verified, that *man* being in Honour, did not abide. O! what anxious and perplexing thoughts had poor *Adam*, no doubt some hours after his Fall, when he did reflect upon that which was once his Condition, and did compare it with that which was now his lot, might he not take up that Lamentation over himself, *Man in his best Estate is altogether vanity*. And likewise he might have that Proverb taken up of himself, *How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning?* Now, Man, by losing that blessed Unity that was in his Affection, hath contracted a woful and infinite diversity in his Affections towards these things that are here below: so that those Affections which did once sweetly run in one Channel toward God, are now divided

vided and separated in many channels, towards those things that are below him: and there is nothing beneath the Sun, that leadeth captive so many of our desires as the World: therefore it were your advantage to be crucified to the World, and to have the World crucified to you, that you may discover that endless vanity, and unspeakable vexation of Spirit, that is in all things that are here: The World is a perfect compend and complete epitome of all misery: God himself is that compend of all blessedness, so that there is nothing that we can take up under this, but it is most eminently in him. It is a Duty which is much undervalued in these Days. Christians to be promoting in that blessed Work of having themselves crucified to the World, and having the World crucified to them: O! how suitable is it for those who are Heirs and Expectants of that blessed hope, and everlasting enjoyment of being with God, who is the Judge of all Flesh, and with Jesus Christ, who is the Mediator of the new Covenant, and with the innumerable company of holy Angels, and to be made Heirs and Co-heirs with Jesus Christ. Is it not below you to be much taken up in your vain and anxious pursuits after these things that are here below? The objects of the desires of your immortal Spirits ought to be more high than things below, and ought to be more divine than things humane; your affections ought to be ascending as pillars of smoke, and ye should be breathing after that blessed Day, when there shall be a Confinement of all your Affections on him. We have on some occasions spoken unto you, of the Grace of Humility, and of the Grace of Love, the one teaching us to undervalue our selves, the other teaching us to value God: And had you been much taken up in the spiritual and living exercise of those, there should not have been much difficulty to perswade you at this time

Time. We shall not insist long in telling you what Mortification is; it is a constant and blessed Endeavour of the Christian, to remove out of his Way all these Impediments that do interrupt the Exercise of Love: As likewise, it is that which intertaineth a constant and perpetual Antipathy and holy indignation against every thing, thorow which his conformity with God, and that perfect likeness and similitude with his Maker, might be in any Way impaired. Mortification doth not consist in those unconstant and unequal exercises of mortifying our Lusts, it consists not in these violent flashes of holy Zeal and indignation against our Iniquities; for though that Indignation be violent for its Time, yet it doth quickly vanish and pass away: but that Grace of Mortification must be a constant and daily Exercise; we will solace our selves in the Chambers of our imagery, by beholding our Idols pourtrayed upon the Wall; we will study to receive Satisfaction in our apprehensions, when we cannot receive Satisfaction in the actual destruction of them: Such is likewise the woful desoperateness of the Hearts of the Children of Men, that when God hath put a Worm to the Root of that Gourd, under the shadow of which we used to solace our selves, we cry forth of a discontented Humor, *it is better for us to Die than to Live*: O! there are many here, to whom it would be Death to out-live their Idols; their Idols and they are pleasant in their lives, and they desire not to be divided in their Deaths. Mortification doth not consist in that partial and divided Way of mortifying our Corruptions, we taking vengeance upon some of our Lusts, but with *Saul*, sparing that who is the King; *Naaman the Syrian* must have an indulgence of his bowing his Knee in the House of *Remmon*; *Lot* must plead for the sparing of *Zoar*, that small thing; and so when we are intending that Work of Mortification, we plead for the sparing of these things,

things, which we call *Zoars*, these small, but our Master-Corruptions. Certainly that evangelick Mortification which is required of us, doth not consist in this; for we must intend an universal Separation between us and all our Idols, we must cast away all our Idols to the Moles and to the Bats, and we must defile the covering of them, and he alone must be the cover of our Eyes. He never knew what the Grace of Mortification meant who never set about the accomplishment of the ruin of that great and Master-Idol, which domineereth over him: And we conceive, that the best and most solid way of knowing our growth in Mortification is by reflecting upon the decay of these Idols, which are our predominants; other Sins which assail us may decay, and their strength wax Weak, and yet mortification not be on the growing Hand, for there are many of our Lusts, that rather die by Concession, than by constraint; there are many of our Idols that rather go out of us, than are cast out.

Now the first thing that a Christian ought to endeavour to mortifie is, his Love to the World, which was the Practice of this holy Man: In the Words he pointeth out unto us that Way, wherein he did attain this compleat and spiritual Mortification to the World, he holden forth to us in these Words, *By whom*, which doth relate unto *Jesus Christ*, who is made mention of in the Words going before; or, as the Words may be rendered, *By which I am crucified to the World*, and they relate unto the Cross of *Jesus Christ*. Now under this notion of *being crucified*, he doth certainly hold forth unto us, that great difficulty that is in accomplishing the Work of Mortification; And under the Name of *being Crucified*, he holdeth forth unto us, the longsomeness of the Time that we must spend, before we can attain compleat Mortification, *Crucifying* being one of the most lent and slow of all violent Deaths. Mortification is not a Work of one Day, it will

cost us many Days and years, before we shall crush the Head of him, who hath so oft-times crushed our Heel, before that blessed Promise shall be fulfilled, that *all things shall be put in Subjection unto us*: Sin doth most easily invade us and take Possession of us, but it is not easily dispossessed; for except we had the infinite Strength of him who is *Jehovah*, we might sit down and close our Hands, and never mint to oppose these Idols, under whose Subjection we are. This Word of *being crucified*, doth likewise hold forth the painfulness and uneasiness of this Work of Mortification, *Crucifying* being a Death, amongst all violent Deaths, one of the most bitter: We must certainly be mortified to our Ease, before we can be mortified to our Lusts; we must travail in Birth, before the Grace of Mortification can be formed in us. It is a woful Evil in these Days, that the most part of People walk under this apprehension, that there is not much difficulty to mortify their Corruptions, but it is a token, that they never knew what it was to mortify them, who never knew the difficulty of Mortification.

The third thing that is holden forth under this Name of *being Crucified* is, That woful reluctancy and indisposition of Spirit, which we have to this blessed Exercise of Mortifying our Corruptions, we have as great unwillingness unto it, as though we were to subject our selves to some violent Death. O! how is Vanity, and Corruption joined to the Spirits of the Sons of Men: how loath are we to have that woful, and accursed Union betwixt us and our Lusts dissolved? O! how many Orators and Procurators within our selves, have we to plead for this, *The sparing of our Lusts*: we may be persuaded of this, that if we be not the ruin of our Iniquitie, Iniquity will certainly be our Ruin. O! how may we blush and be confounded seven Days, that we should be so loath to have a separation betwixt

betwixt us and these things, by which our distance with God, and Estrangement from him, is so much increased: this vanity is unspeakable, that we should be soaverse from that wherein our eternal Blessedness doth ly, in having that woful Band, which we have wreathed about our own necks, taken off by that blessed and everlasting Hand of him who hath died and risen again, to accomplish this blessed design.

Lastly, Under this Word of being crucified, is held forth unto us that complete and spiritual Mortification to the World, that this holy Man attained to: he was as one dead to these things: he was not much exercised in Joy in having the World, neither was he exercised in Grief, by wanting the things of the World; he was a man dead, which could not be moved by any of those things: We do not say so, that Paul was altogether a Stoick, without all passions of Grief and Sorrow, or of Joy; but we only say this, that he did not grieve for the want of the World, as those who have no Hope; neither did he so joy in having the World, as those who have not a more divine and high Spring of consolation: he was clothed with a holy Indifferency, and a blessed Neutrality in having or wanting these things; it was none of Pauls desire to have the World; he had learned that Divine and Excellent Art of being content with every state of Life: he knew not what it was to murmur; And it were certainly much our Advantage, to be provoked to Jealousie, when we reflect upon the Practice of this holy Man. I conceive, that if all that are here, would examine themselves, by how many degrees their Mortification to the World, doth come short of this, they might sit down and conclude with themselves, that they are yet to begin to mortifie: Yea, there are many here, to whom we may say, that they are far from being clothed with a holy Indifferency in having the things of the World, that they are clothed with

with that woful & indispensible Necessity in pursuing after these Things : This is the Language of the most Part, *Give, give*, Men hurrying themselves in Multitudes of Hopes, and of Fears, and of Expectations, and likewise an infinite Number of Desires. And what is the End and Result of all these Things, but *Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit.*

Now, that ye may be helped to attain this concerning Duty, to be mortified to the World, we shall propose these Things unto you, The *First* is this, Be much taken up in a holy Contemplation and spiritual beholding of these unsearchable Excellencies that are in God : If once the soul of the Creature were elevated to behold him, there should not be much Difficulty, to be mortified to the World : Were we once admitted to draw by a Lap of the Vail, and behold that uncreated Glory, and unexpressible Majesty that is treasured up in him, Mortification should be no great Difficulty unto us : This is clearly held forth here ; for Paul doth tell by whom he had this Grace of Mortification, it was by beholding *that pleasant Plant of Renown Jesus Christ*, This is clear likewise, *1 John 5. 5. Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ?* Did we once believe that fundamental Article of Faith, that he who was crucified upon the Tree, was the real Son of God, we should most easily win to this concerning Duty of Mortification. We may reduce all the Causes of our little Growth in this blessed Work, to that woful Ignorance of God, wherewith the most Part of us are clothed : Were there a Door opened to us in Heaven, and were we in the Spirit to behold him, who sits upon the Throne, whose Countenance is like a Sardine Stone, and about whose Throne there is that Rainbow ; could we penetrate thorow these Vails, wherewith both he and they are covered, we being clothed with the Vail of our Ignorance, and likewise with the

the Vail of our Impurity ; and he being clothed with these two most glorious Vails, the Vail of his Unsearchableness, and the Vail of that wonderful and unexpressible Majesty that is in him, the one confounding the Judgment, and the other confounding the Affections ; so that Affection and Judgment in a Manner are put to a None-exercise, and both these do sweetly resolve in that blessed one Act of Admiration. We need not speak much to the Commendation of those unto you, who were never acquainted with him, that so ye might be perswaded to forsake your old Lovers ; we shall only say this, Silence and Admiration they speak least, and yet speak most : There is more divine Oratory in holy Silence, and more excellent Expressions in blessed Admiration, than all our Invention could reach : What can Man speak of him, who is that unsearchable and incomprehensible Majesty ? This may appear a Paradox to you, that Silence should speak, and Admiration commend : But it is no Paradox, when the Object of our Commendation is by infinite Degrees exalted above our Blessing and our Praise. O ! Men of the World, will you once be perswaded to make that blessed Divorce betwixt you and your Idols, that there may be an everlasting Conjunction betwixt God and you : O ! if ye had so much divine Understanding, as to judge of Things according to their real Worth ; *He alone shall be exalted in that Day* : Come and see, and behold, what infinite Sweetness is treasured up in him, those Springs wherewith ye delight your selves shall ere long be dried up : But *he* is that high and infinite Spring, which always floweth out, and yet is not impaired.

The second Thing whereby we may attain to this blessed Duty of Mortification to the World, is this, by reflecting how passing and transient these Things are, wherewith the Sons of Men use to solace themselves. *Paul* doth press Mortification to the World from this Consideration, 1 Cor: 7. 31, *The Fashion of*

this World passeth away : The Word is most emphatick, this *Schema* and Representation of the World, or this Stage-play of the World, it passeth away ; therefore, let those that rejoice be as though they rejoiced not, and be careful for nothing : This is clear, 1 John 1. 17. and 1 Pet. 4. 7. Did we solidly believe how changeable those Enjoyments of the World were, would we hurry ourselves so much in our Pursuits after them ? Those who are lifted up in their Enjoyments this Day, may be thrust down low the next Day. *Job*, who was a Man enriched in many Things, yet a few Days, yea, we may say, a few Hours, made a sad and strange Exchange : We may affirm that, with great Assurance of Truth, Surely Man at his best Estate is altogether Vanity : That Word that is there (*at his best Estate*) may be rendred thus, *although he stand, etiamsi constitutus*, is our most fixed and settled Condition in the World : This is the Embleme and Motto of your State, *Vanity*, most subject to change ; and why should you weary your selves in the Fire for that which is very Vanity ?

The third Thing by which ye may attain this Duty of Mortification, is to be much taken up in the Consideration of the Brevity of your Life : I suppose, that if we were walking more in the House of Mourning, and were believing that Truth, *That it is appointed for Men once to die*, and that shortly we must be brought Home unto that unchangeable Estate of Life ; O ! how would this allay us in our Pursuits ? I think this were a little Water, which we might mix with our Wine, when there is greatest Confidence of Creature-contentments ; lest the Fume of this Wine should distemper our Head, we may mix it with this Water, *the Brevity of our Life*. It is a sweet Subject for Meditation when we are most high, to be much in the Consideration of this, that within a few Days, we shall be most low. What is your Life but a Vapour, which doth quickly vanish, and doth but appear for a little ?

Suppose the whole Creation should stay with you during all your Time, yet how short should your Enjoyment be? What is Man's Life, but a Hand-breadth, these four Finger-breadths, which is one of all the least of all geometrical Measures, there is Morning, Forenoon, Afternoon, and Night, all which do amount to a Day? There is Infancy, Youth, Manhood, and Old-age, and these do quickly vanish and pass away. How many are hurried into Eternity, in the first Step of their Days, in their Infancy? And again, how many in their Youth? and we have frequent Experience, that many in their Man-hood, and in the Flower of their Age, that Sentence cometh forth, *Return ye Children of Men*: And there is not one amongst an hundred, that do attain to that utmost Period that Nature doth allow; and what though ye did live fourscore of Years, which is the utmost Period that Nature hath allowed, yet doth your Time quickly vanish and fly away? Why should you solace your selves with those Things that cannot eternally remain with you? When ye go down to the Grave, ye can take nothing of those Things with you; for in all Points as you came, so you shall go, and what Profit is there, that ye have laboured for the Wind?

The fourth Thing whereby we may be helped to attain this, is this, Be much in the mortifying of those Corruptions, which cannot be intertained, but by intertaining also this woful Corruption of Covetousness: There are some Corruptions, which have so near Affinity to, as likewise Dependence upon this Sin, that if these be not crushed, we cannot attain to this Duty of Mortification; there is *Prodigality and Pride*; these two grand Enemies, to the Accomplishment of this blessed Design; and we would begin to crush these before we can begin to accomplish this.

There is another Way, which is this, Be much taken up in the reflecting upon that blessed Hope, and that Grace, which shall be brought unto you at the Revelation.

tion of *Jesus Christ*. Peter presseth Sobriety to all Things here below, by this Argument, *1 Pet: 1. 13. Be sober,* and he giveth this Reason of it, *For the Grace that shall be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jesus Christ: O!* were we much taken up in beholding that blessed Estate of Life, which the Souls of just Men made perfect, shall have with God, where we shall enjoy, and yet not loath: There shall be an everlasting Conjunction betwixt Desire and Enjoyment of him, who is the Person beloved; so that it thinks never to receive Satisfaction: All it doth receive, is more to provoke its Appetite, than to satisfy its Desire.

There is this last, which is this, *Be much in the Consideration of that Day, when all the Families of the Earth shall appear before him in the Valley of Decision.* This indeed would help us to much Mortification to these Things of the World, as is clear from *Ecc. 11. 9.* had we the Faith of that Day engraven upon our Spirits, that we must render an Account of our Ways, O! how wary should we be in ingaging with Vanity? I think the great Cause why sin hath so universal Dominion over the Sons of Men is, because we do not solidly believe that there is such a Day approaching, when we shall appear before the Judgment-seat of him, who shall judge not after the seeing of the Eye, nor shall reprove after the hearing of the Ear, but shall judge righteous Judgment: The Terror of the Lord would certainly perswade us, if we did believe this: O! what a holy unwillingness should we have in walking after the Paths of our Idols.

Now we shall shut up our Discourse with this, *Be perswaded once to begin that Work of Mortification, and especially in mortifying your Love to the World: He that returneth Victorafter that War with his Idols, we may call him Joseph; for he shall be as a fruitful Bough, whose Branches run over the Walls.* If once you spoil that grand and Arch-rebel, who doth so much oppose you,

in a Manner, you should stand alone and sing a Triumph, they should flee when none pursueth, and we ought to be strong as a Lion, and who should rouse us up?

OF SPIRITUAL CONTENTMENT.

SERMON IX.

Phil. 4. 11. *I have learned in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content.*

IT was Adam's Ignorance of this divine Mystery of Christianity, to be content with every Estate, wherein he was placed, that did bring him down from that high Pinacle of his Excellency, and did degrade him from that primitive Glory, wherewith he was clothed; for he not being content with that precious and excellent Lot, wherein God had placed him, but coveting after a more noble and excellent Being, he came exceedingly short of his Design. And such is the *Athenian* and woful Frame of Spirit wherewith Men are possessed, that they can fancy no Blessedness in what they are, but imagine a great Blessedness to be in what they are not; hence it is, that Men do covet the Lot of others, and are dissatisfied with their own Estate and Condition: And certainly the Affections of Men, while they are living under these Spheres, which are in perpetual Motion, can never be satisfied, nor be at Rest; which was the Observation of that Master of Experience, Prov. 27. 20. *Hell and Destruction are never full, so the Eyes of Man are never satisfied*; and as he saith, Eccl. 1. 8, *The Eye is not satisfied with*

seeing,

seeing, nor the Ear filled with hearing: And we may likewise add, that the Heart is not satisfied with enjoying; and it is certainly thorow the Deceitfulness of the Spirit of Man, and that invisible Root of Pride, that every Lot and Condition of Life is subject to Satisfaction and Loathing: Private Men do envy the Greatness of Princes, and Princes do envy the quiet Repose of private Men, though they will not descend, nor reduce themselves unto that Estate, but do always fear that, which sometimes they are constrained to desire: And believe me, a Christian's sitting down seriously, to contemplate and view what an infinite Multitude of Hopes, Fears and Desires the Spirit of Man is possessed with; as likewise to behold how that *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*, is engraven upon the choicest Lot that a Christian can meet with here, he may be provoked to look out at the Windows of his Prison-house, and long for that precious Day, when *Christ shall be as a Roe, or as a young Hind upon the Mountains of Bashan*, waiting to be exalted to that precious and excellent Estate of Life, where there shall be neither loathing, nor longing. *Abel*, who hath been the first Possessor of Heaven, of all the House and Family of *Adam*, and hath dwelt in it near six Thousand Years, yet there is not in him the least Inclination, or Motion to change or alter his Estate. There is no loathing in Heaven, nor Desire to sit there: And believe me, this divine Mystery of Contentment with every Lot and Condition, in which a Christian is placed, is not easily attained. O! what Repinings hath the unmortified Spirit of Man to the Dispensations of God, in regulating his Lot and Estate, which doth alone speak forth the *Atheism* of our Hearts: For it is, as it were, Man proposing a Model, and Form unto God, how he should rule and govern the World. I think Christians are as much subject to the Fashion of this Contempt and Pride as any. It was a noble Saying of

one, in the Commendation of Victory over a Man's self, *Tunc omnia Regna tenebis, cum poteris renisse tui*, ye shall then be made a Possessor of all Kingdoms, when ye shall be made a Ruler and King of your self. And no doubt, one that is once mortified to this Passion of Discontent, he may dwell upon the mountains of *Ararat*, in the midst of all the Revolutions, and Changes that are here below; such a Christian may sweetly contemplate the overturning of Estates and common-wealths, and may patiently endure every Lot that doth befall him, and possess his Soul in Patience. And certainly, if Men knew but this one Thing, that the whole Circumference of the Earth, is but one Point of the Universe, and that all Time that hath been, is, or shall be, is but one Instant, in Comparison of Eternity: And what is Man but a Part of that Point? and what is his Life but a small Part of that Instant? And why then should Man anxiously complain, to spend a Part of a Moment in enduring the most anxious and sad Things that can befall him? And, (as *Christ* doth most divinely speak) *Can a Man by taking Thought, add one Cubit to his Stature?* What poor Advantage hath a Man by his Discontentment and Sorrow, if it be not to render himself more miserable? we may say of heavenly Mindedness, and of Contentment, they are like *Hypocrites* Twins, that live and die together; they are two sweet Companions, that always go together, and cannot be divided.

But to descend a little more to the Words, you have *Paul* in them obviating any Misconstruction, that the *Philippians* might have of his Joy, which he expresseth in the former Verse, as if he had been one, who was coveting great Things for himself, or desiring to be great in the World, no saith he, *I speak not these Things, because of Want*; which formerly I had, and is now made up; for, saith he, *I have learned in every State that I am, therewith to be content.* There is no Lot, saith

saith *Paul*, but I can patiently endure it, and can with a divine Complacency carry my self under it : And this he proveth in the 12 Verse, *I know*, saith he, *how to be abased*. I am instructed in this divine Art, how to walk soberly under Debasingment, and *I know*, saith he, *how to abound*. I am not one that is puffed up with a prosperous Lot in the World : And lest this Assertion of *Paul's* should seem to be a boasting beyond his Line, and of being exalted above Measure, he doth sweetly subjoin that humble Assertion, *I can do all Things through Christ that strengtheneth me* ; as if he had said, Do not mistake me, or conceive me under a more divine and high Notion than ye ought ; for I am but a poor and sinful Man, who can do nothing of my self, but as I am over-acted by a divine and supreme Hand. I am enabled to triumph over the most adverse and sinister Lot, that can befall me.

The Words which we have read, in the original they are most significant and emphatick ; that Word which is here rendered *Content*, is *All-sufficient*, and so the Words they sweetly run thus, *I have learned in every State wherein I am to be All-sufficient*, of which that Word, *Prov. 14. 14.* is a sweet Commentary, *The Backslider in Heart shall be filled with the Fruit of his own Way, but a godly Man shall be satisfied from himself*. In a Manner, there is a Well-spring of everlasting Consolation within the Christian, which maketh him endure every anxious Lot. And no Doubt, that Word, *I have learned*, doth both speak the Difficulty of attaining this Mystery of divine Contentment, as likewise, it speaketh out that Ignorance of this divine and noble End, wherewith *Paul* was once possessed : I was once, saith he, as rude as any in the Knowledge of this Thing, but now through the Understanding and Wisdom of God, I am made perfect in the Knowledge of these Things. And that Word, *In every State*, doth exceedingly commend that great Pitch of Christianity, unto which

Paul had attained, there was no Lot that could befall him wrong : And we shall only say this by the Way, Continuance of Affliction is one of the greatest occasions of Impatience that is imaginable. A Christian, when first he meets with a Cross, may be provoked to salute it, and embrace it ; but if it be lengthned out upon him, then he crieth forth, *Hast thou found me, O thou mine Enemy?* and then beginneth to call in Question the loving Kindness of the Lord, and to complain, *that he hath shut up his Mercies in everlasting Forgetfulness,* though we may say, In the Day that a Christian shall be passing *thorow the Valley of the Shadow of Death,* he shall be sweetly convinced of his Impatience : When a Christian shall be constrained to engrave that Motto upon the Door of his everlasting Rest, *he hath done all Things well.* What Thoughts will ye have of these Risings and Debatings of Spirit, wherewith ye have been possessed ? We may imagine, and not without some Ground, that a great Part of Eternity shall be spent in Interrogations : *Christ* shall interrogate us, if we lacked any Thing while we were here below ? and we shall be constrained to answer, *Nothing* ; even in that Day when he sent us out without Scrip, or Money, or without Sandals, or any Thing, and those that did belong to us, we shall be constrained to subscribe to the *infinite Wisdom of God,* in regulating of our Lot.

Now in speaking upon this divine Quality and Duty of divine Contentment, (which we conceive is a Duty most requisite in these Days) we shall not insist long in pointing out what this divine Grace of Contentment is, but we conceive, it includeth not only this, a sweet and composed Frame of Spirit, under every anxious Lot and Dispensation with which we meet, of which that Word is a Commentary, *Lev. 10. 3.* where it is said of *Aaron*, when his Sons were cut off, *He held his Peace,* and that Word, *Pf. 62. 1.* *Truly my Soul waiteth upon the Lord :* But the Words in the Original are thus,

Truly,

Truly, my Soul be thou silent unto God, as they are rendered in the margin of the Book, as if he would have said, do not fret, nor be disquieted, because of any thing that he causeth out unto thee.

But likewise this Grace and Duty of Contentment includeth a holy complacency, and sweet serenity and calmness of Spirit under every Lot, of which that Word is a Commentary, *Jam. 1. 2. Count it all joy when you fall into divers Temptations*, and that Word, *Romans 5. 2. We glory in Tribulation*. Neither shall we dwell long upon this, to prove that it is the Duty of a Christian to be content with every Estate wherein God shall put him: This is clear, *1. Tim. 6. 8. Having Food and Raiment, let us therewith be content*. and *Heb. 13. 5. Be content with these things that you have*, and *James 4. 7. and Luke 3. 14. And we may say, If a Christian made the World but his Servant, a little would content him; but if once he make the World his Master, and Lord of his Affections, then his Desires will be infinite, and cannot at all be satisfied. We shall not long stand to inveigh against that too much Addictedness of Man to those passing and transient vanities of the World: We conceive there are these three things, which Men do most earnestly covet, there is Pleasure and Riches, and Honour: And certainly, these are below an immortal Spirit, to fix their desires upon them: Would ye have Solomon's verdict of Riches, O ye that trust in uncertain Riches, ye have it sweetly in *Prov. 23. 5. Wilt thou set thine Eyes upon that which is not? In a Manner, Riches they have not a Being, for they take Wings to themselves and flee away*, as Solomon doth most sweetly speak, *Eccles. 5. 11. If Riches increase, what profits (saith he) is there to the Owners thereof, save to be beholders of them with their Eyes; all that the Owner of Riches hath is, the seeing of them, which a Man, who is a passer by, my likewise have, though he be not Possessor of them, And hence is that Word, Luke 14. where the**

Man

Man desiring to be excused for not coming to Christ, saith of himself, *I have bought a Piece of Ground, and must needs go see it*; all his Enjoyment of it was comprehended in that one poor Thing, *to behold it*. And as for Honour and Glory, which Spirits that are more refined, and are not so much wedded to the Things of a World, pursue after, I would only have them knowing that one Word, *Psal. 61. 9 Men of high Degree are a Lie, and Men of low Degree are Vanity*; as if he would have said, Any Preheminency that one hath, that hath an excellent Lot in the World above a poor one, doth consist in this, the one is a Vanity, and the other is a lying Vanity, speaking somewhat to be in him, which is not really in him; and that Word, *Acts 25. 23.* where, speaking of Bernice that came in with great Pomp and Glory unto the Senat-house, the Word that is there rendered *Pomp and Glory* is this he came in with a great fantasie *Μετα πολλης φαντασιας* with a great Shout and Image, without any Thing in Reality: And as for Pleasures of the World, which these Epicurean Spirits of the World are so much besotted, know that Verdict of Solomon, which he hath of these Things, *Vanity of Vanities, and all Things are Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*. And what can the Man do that cometh after the King? If Solomon found no more, no Doubt, none that cometh after him, can find any more.

But that which we shall speak to first upon this, shall be, What are the Causes and Principles from whence the Discontentment of one doth flow, under an anxious or sad Lot that doth befall him? And we conceive that it either doth proceed from this, a Christian not being much in the Exercise of Self-examination, as it is clear from that Word, *Psal. 4. 4. Examine your selves upon your Bed, and be still*, speaking so much that the compendious Way unto Submission and Contentment under any Lot, is to be much about Self-examination: And certainly Self-examination hath much

much Influence upon Contentment under every Lot, because such a one doth most accurately take up these Imperfections and Blemishes that are in him, so in Stead of complaining, he is constrained to wonder and cry forth, *Why should a living Man complain, a Man for the Punishment of his Sin*: Likewise one that is much in Self-examination, is a Man that can take up the Intendment of the Rod, as likewise the Advantage of it, and so he is constrained patiently to bear the Rod in his Youth, and to sit down, and adore the unsearchable Wisdom of God in dispensing such Things to him. That Word, *Prov. 19. 3.* is oftentimes verified to us, *The Heart of Man perverteth his Way*, and then he fretteth against the Lord, when he is chastened for it. O! but if a Christian were dwelling much at Home, he might wonder that yet he had a Being in the World, and is not cut off from the right Hand of the Lord. O! bless him eternally that ye are not sent away to be reserved in everlasting Chains.

There is this likewise that doth occasion Discontentment under our Lot, and it is, want of that divine Preparation to meet with every Lot that can befall us before it come. We think a Christian ought to be general in his Resolutions, to bear every Cross that Christ will carve out. And certainly, there are these two Advantages that a Christian hath of general and universal Resolutions. *First*, He hath this Advantage, That when he is chastened, as it were, in his Goods, or any other Thing that belongeth to him, he beginneth to sing a Song of Praise, because it is not worse with him: There can no Lot befall a Man, who is universal in his Resolutions, but he will sing a Song of Praise unto God, because of it. *Secondly*, He hath this Advantage, That Foresight and Resolution to meet with any Cross, doth exceedingly dispose the Christian for meeting with it: We conceive that Word which is, *Job 31. 25.* *on Job's Patience, For the Thing which I greatly*

greatly feared, is come upon me: Afflictions do oftentimes surprize us and so we faint in the Day of adversity, and so prove our strength to be but small.

There is this likewise which occasioneth our Discontentment, and it is this, That little heavenly Mindedness, that is in a Christian when he meeteth with his Rod: O! but a Christian when he sitteth down upon mount Pisga, to behold that promised Land, might with patience bear his Rod: this is clear, 2 Cor. 4. 16. compared with Verse 17. where Paul giveth this Reason of his courage and constancy under his Rod, that he had an Eye unto those things that are eternal: Did ye never know what such things meant, as to drown the Thoughts of your present misery, in these precious depths of Eternity; to be beholding so much in Heaven, as might infinitely solace, yea, and make up all your losses here. I confess that Opinion of the Stoicks, that did commend Apathie and want of passions unto Men, that they should not be moved with grief for the want of any thing, nor be moved with Joy, for the having or possessing of any thing, is in some Sense good: hence was it that in some Sense they spoke divinely, *nihil boni vel mali accidit homini, nisi bonus vel malus animus*; that there was no evil nor good that did befall Man, but only a good and evil Mind: If the Heart was in a divine and spiritual Frame, they knew not what any other sad or anxious lot could do to them.

There is this likewise which occasioneth discontentment, and it is this, the want of the taking up God, as the Cause and Author of those sad evils which befall us; which if it were once believed, we should be ashamed to dispute and murmur so much as we do: this is clear, 1 Sam. 3. near the close, that Word of Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*: and that Word, Psal. 39. 9. *I was dumb, and opened not my Mouth, and the Reason is given of it, because thou didst it*: and that

that Word, *Isa. 39. 8. Good is the Word of the Lord.* And certainly the Murmurings and Repinings of our Hearts, do speak that gross Atheism that dwelleth within us: O! durst we debate with him who is *Almighty*, or put him to make an Account of his Ways, who is that *supreme and absolute one*: Is it fit to be said to such a Prince as he is, Thou art ungodly, and to condemn him who is most just? O! be much in the Study of the Sovereignty of God, when he, as it were, doth call, as in a solemn Assembly, all your Terrors round about.

There is this likewise which doth occasion it, which is our little being in the Meditation and serious Thoughts of the Brevity of our Life, and of Time: If a Man knew that it were but for an Hour, or for ten Days that he were to endure Tribulation, he might patiently submit and bear with his Rod: This is clear, *1 Cor. 7. 29.* compared with the following Verses, where from that Doctrine, that Time was short, he doth infer this Exhortation, *Let those that weep, be as though they weeped not*, as if he would have said, Let them not be much moved with those Things, Time will have a close: Believe me, it is not long before the small Period of Time that hath intervened betwixt Eternity before, and Eternity after, shall be sweetly swallowed up, and there shall be nothing but Eternity.

And there is this, lastly, which doth occasion our great Discontentment under our Rod, which is, That Unmortifiedness and Unsubduedness of Spirit, Pride being the great predominant Evil; and if we may allude to that Word, *Only by Pride cometh Contention*, we may certainly say it holdeth well here, that only by Pride are these Contendings that we have with God, concerning his Dispensations towards us. In Sum, it is this, It is impossible for a Christian not to bumble, to be content: Pride is one of the greatest Opposites unto divine Contentment under any Rod that we meet with.

with : O ! but if a Christian were humbled, we might sit in the Dust, and sweetly adore the infinite Love and Patience of God.

Now we shall in the second Place propose some Considerations, that may hinder a Christian, or any other, from being discontent with any Lot that doth befall them. and the first is this, That there are many sad and woful Companions of a Christian's Discontentment, and repining against any Dispensation of God, and we conceive it is not only this bad Companion that a Christian hereby is indisposed and unfitted to go about spiritual Duties; especially these two, of *Prayer* and *Praise*. It is impossible for a Christian that is under the Exercise of Discontentment, to pray or praise; there is somewhat of this pointed at, *1 Tim: 2. 8.* Where there is a Qualification of a right Prayer, that he should be without Wrath, not having any Murmurs, or Repinings within his Heart: As likewise it is clear concerning Praise, *Psal. 57. 7. My Heart is fixed, it is fixed*, which speaketh so much as this, that Praise doth require a divine and composed Frame of Spirit: And it is most certain, that Discontentment doth impede Prayer; for there are three sweet Ingredients of the Exercise of Prayer, which Discontentment doth exceedingly cut off; there is Love, Fervency, and Faith; which no Doubt Discontentment doth abridge; a discontented Christian cannot be a Christian burning with Love; Jealousie is such a Predominant with him, that Love cannot be his Exercise. And certainly, if Prayer do not proceed from the precious Principle of Love, it wants that one Arm which it ought to have: Neither can a Christian exercise Faith, because he hath now, as it were, taken up so bad an Opinion of God, that he cannot repose his Confidence, nor Hope in him: And as for Fervency, they are so much in poring upon their present Lot, that they can, as it were, be fervent about nothing, but only in the

the Removal of that. It is certain, that let a Christian examine himself, there is nothing that cuts the Neck of Prayer so much as discontent ; in a Man, the Spirit, as it were, is turned brutish, being uncomposed for any spiritual Converse with God.

There is this bad Companion likewise, which accompanieth Discontentment, we are incapacitate and rendered altogether unable to resist Temptations while Discontentment is in Exercise. It is impossible for a Christian to be a Mortifier, or Resister of Lust when Discontentment is once in Exercise : And are these two Evils, that get most marvellous Advantage over these that are under Discontentment, and these are the predominant Lust of such a one, be what it will, and pride, these two Evils do spring apace : And certainly, all other Lusts do get much Victory over such a one : A Christian may lose more by one Hour's Discontentment under a Cross, than he can regain in many Months, yea, on this Side of Eternity : And it is no Wonder that Temptations do prevail upon such a one, he is off his Watch, and his Strength is gone : In a Manner, Temptations speak that, *Their Strength is gone from them, let us go up and put them to fight.*

There is this bad Companion likewise, that doth accompany Discontentment, want of Tenderneſs of Spirit, and the Loss of it. It is most certain, that there is nothing that doth cut off Tenderneſs, so much as Discontentment : For a Christian that is such, is not living under the Impaſſion of the Fear, or of the Love of the Almighty, which are the two great Principles of Tenderneſs of Spirit. Certainly let one examine, they will find, that by their Anxiety and Bitterneſs of Spirit, they have made their Hearts to die as a Stone within them, and have made their Bands strong upon their Spirits.

And there is this last bad Companion of Discontentment,

contentment, a Christian undervaluing all the former Mercies, which he hath received; when once a Christian meeteth with that which contradicteth his Humor, and he loseth his Esteem of every Thing that formerly hath been bestowed upon him: There is something of this pointed at, *Gen. 37. last, in Jacob's Impatience in the Loss of Joseph*, where he doth undervalue all his Brethren beside: And it is most clear in that Word, *Gen. 12. 13.* where, though it be spoken of a wicked Man, yet by Proportion it holdeth of a Christian; because *Mordecai* did not bow his Knee, he cried out concerning all his other Mercies, *they avail me nothing*; he knew not what it was to put a Price upon Mercies that he had received: But because this which was the great Lust of his Heart was away, he did undervalue the rest: And it is most certain, that there is nothing doth so heighten a Christian's Disrespect unto the most precious and excellent Things of God, as this of Discontent: And this is one Subtlety and Device of Satan's, that a Christian may with great Ease, and with less Conviction do it: They do ordinarily construct their choicest Mercies, to be Delusions; and so upon that Account begin to undervalue and misprize them.

There is this Consideration, which may move you to wrestle against Discontentments, It is a Character and distinguishing Mark of a Christian from a Reprobate: I would have Murmurers seriously to meditate upon that sad Word, which is in *Jude 19. Verse*, compared with the 15. where speaking of Christ's coming to judge and execute Vengeance; the first put in the Roll are these, *These are Murmurers and Complainers*, and that Word, *1 Cor. 10. 10. Be not Murmurers, as many of them were, and were destroyed of the Destroyer*: And certainly, it is no Wonder that Murmuring pass under so bad a Notion, not only because it is indeed that Sin which speaketh out of *Atheism* most, but because

it is that Sin which doth declare most a Christian, or any others desire to be independent, and not in Subjection unto God: In a Manner such is the woful Ambition of our Spirit, that we desire not to depend upon him, but that we should have our own Lot in our own Hand, to carve out unto our selves. O! we know not what it is to give Christ any one Vote in the Dispensations which do befall us: We would be co-ordinate with God, and not subordinate to him, to put a Blank in his Hand, desire him to fill it up with what he liketh: Christ doth oft-times put a Blank in a Christian's Hand, as in that Word, *What will ye that I should do unto you*, there is Christ's Blank, that he doth give us, and though thorow our Ignorance we cannot fill it up, it is best to give it back to himself, that he may fill it up with what he listeth.

There is this Consideration also, that may persuade you to desist from Discontentment, It is that Sin which doth interrupt the Accomplishment of the Promises: As likewise it doth interrupt the Exercise of Faith upon the Promises: This is clear, *Num. 14. 27.* compared with 8. where that Promise that was given to them of entering into the Land of *Canaan*, they were cut short of it, because of their Murmuring; and it doth interrupt the Exercise of Faith upon the Promises, as is clear, *Psal. 106. 24.* compared with *Verse 25.* where it is said, *They believed not his Word*, and the Ground of it is given, *For they were Murmurers*: And it is no Wonder that Murmuring interrupt the Exercise of Faith upon the Promises; For it is impossible for a Murmurer either to have the Faith of the Omnipotency of God, or to have the Faith of his Goodness or Love, which are these two precious Pillars of Faith upon which it must build it self, O! but these that begin once to debate with him, do quickly put Faith out of Exercise. And I would have you knowing this, That there is a Discontentment

Contentment of Judgment, and a Discontentment of the Will and Affections; and oft-times a Christian will win over the Discontentment of Judgment and Reason, when he cannot mortifie the Discontentment of his Will and Affections; for the Sovereignty of God, and the Sinfulness of our Nature, will silence our Reason; but no Doubt, it must be his own immediate Hand, that must silence the Murmurings of our Will. This is clear, *Psal: 12. 5.* Where *David* is convicted of the Unreasonableness of his Discontentment, and yet he is forced to debate with his Will concerning the quieting of it.

There is this Consideration likewise, which may provoke you to desist from Discontentment under your Lot, It is a most unreasonable Evil for a Christian to be discontent: For as *Christ* speaketh, *Matth: 6. 27.* What Profit have you by taking Thought? Can you add one Cubitto your Stature? It is a poor Thing, when a Man hath lost his Goods, to lose his Patience also, what a poor Revenge is that, which a Man taketh of himself? And certainly, the Unreasonableness of Impatience under the Rod, doth not only appear in this, that it hindereth and interrupteth a Christian's seeing of any Mercy that is in the Rod; it is impossible for a discontented one to take up Mercy in the Stroke: But also that Impatience is the compendious Way, for the prolonging of your Strait, and the involving of you in greater Miseries and Thraldoms: As likewise, Impatience doth heighten and increase the Cause of your Bondage, and multiplieth your Iniquities. O! but it is a sweet and excellent Study for a Christian, to endeavour Patience under every Lot? And in a Manner, when we cannot read Love in his Hand, nor in his Face, because of his Frowns and Strokes, yet by Faith, to draw aside the Vail, and read Love in his Heart, and cry forth, *I know the Thoughts of his Heart, that they are Thoughts of Peace, and*

not of Evil: Certainly it is though Discontentment that we cry forth, *Though his Words be as soft as Oil and Butter, yet War is in his Heart*; we do charge him with Contradictions, betwixt his Profession and his Purposes.

And there is this Consideration likewise, which may deter you from Discontentment, which is this, It is impossible for a Christian to profit by his Rod, while he is discontent: All the Time that a Christian is under the fit of Impatience, he spendeth so much of his Time most prodigally: Not employing it, not promoting that which is the great Design of the Rod, to take away Sin, but studying to involve himself in a greater Captivity and Bondage, and to subject himself under the Hand of his Iniquities. O! that ye might be perswaded to exercise more divine Contentment under your Lot, and that ye may be more exercised in contemplating and beholding those precious and excellent Things that are above. That is a most remarkable Word which *Jacob* had to *Esau*, *Gen. 33. 11. I have enough*: The Word in the Original is this, *I have all*: And as Criticks do observe, that Word which *Esau* had in the 8 Verse, *I have enough*, is not, that which *Jacob* hath in the 11 Verse, *I have enough*, that, though *Jacob* was a poorer Man than *Esau*, yet he had all: Such a Christian as hath *Christ* for his Portion, may sweetly sing, *Though I be poor, yet I do possess all Things, as having nothing, and yet possessing all Things, as sorrowing, yet always rejoicing, as poor, and yet behold, we are rich*. It is not long before that Day shall come, when *Christ* shall make up his Jewels, when there shall be a clear and most palpable Difference made betwixt the precious and the vile: Behold, he is upon his Way; and therefore do not murmur, nor repine, a Christian must not expect two Heavens, it is enough if he possess one, we must not travel to Heaven through a Bed of Roses; it is not much though we go to Heaven

Heaven in a fiery Chariot, having Afflictions and Calamity our Companions all along the Way: When our Feet shall be passing thorow the Threshold of the Door of our everlasting Rest, then our Chains shall fall from our Hands, and our Fetters from our Feet; then might we lift up our Heads with Joy, and rejoicing. O! but when those Heavens which you behold, shall be rolled up as a Scroll, when those two great Vails, the visible Vail of the Heavens, and the invisible Vail of Iniquity shall be rent from the Top to the Bottom, and we shall have most clear and precious Discoveries of that noble Plant of Renown, when we shall sit down at the Well's Head and drink, and forget our Misery, and remember our Poverty no more: Let Hope vanish into Fruition, and Faith into Possession, and let Time sweetly vanish into Eternity.

S E R M O N X.

Phil. 4. 11. I have learned in whatsoever State I am therewith to be content.

IT is an ordinary and usual Error and Delusion among Christians, that they place the Exercise of Religion in these Duties that are more sublime and high unto their Apprehension, as Faith, Hope and Prayer, but undervalue the Exercise of those lower Duties, as Contentment, Mortification to the World, & Charity to the Poor, as not being so essentially necessary for the Being of a Christian. I am perswaded, that if any of you had been a Hearer of the Apostle *James*, when he was discoursing upon that divine Subject, wherein pure Religion and undefiled did consist, no Doubt, ye would have

have imagined, that he would have brought forth some divine and profound Thing, in the Exercise of which, pure Religion before God and the Father did consist: But believe me, Religion doth more consist in Practice, than in Speculation, and more in Obedience than in refined Nations. What conceive ye of such a Definition of pure Religion and undefiled, as that which is, *James: 1. 27. Pure Religion and undefiled* doth consist in Mortification to the World, and in Charity to the Poor, these two low undervalued Duties. And this may further ingratiate and commend the Exercise of those low and undervalued Duties, that in the Day when Christ shall appear to judge the quick and the dead, the Ground of the Approbation of the Saints shall be founded upon this low and contemptible Duty, *Charity to the Poor*, and shall be that Ground, which is given of that eternal Blessedness: Which Approbation of Jesus Christ, no Doubt, is a Confirmation of *James* his Doctrine; and that which shall be the Ground of the Reprobation of the Wicked, shall be the Neglect of this low Duty, want of *Charity to the Poor*, and *visiting of the Fatherless*. And believe me, in the Exercise of this divine Quality of Christian-contentment, not a little of Religion doth consist: *Paul* saith, *Godliness with Contentment, is great Gain*. It is by Faith, that a Christian enjoyeth God; it is by Love that he enjoyeth his Neighbour, and by Contentment that he enjoyeth himself. We confess, it is a most mysterious and difficult Lesson for a Christian, in each Lot he is placed in, to be crying forth, *It is good for me to be here, let me make a Tabernacle here*. Ordinarily we have strong Desires to have the carving out of our own Lot. *Solomon* maketh mention of three Things, that are not satisfied, and of four that never say, *It is enough*, the Grave, the barren Womb, the Earth that is not filled with Water, and Fire. And we may add unto these four, this one fifth, the most Part of Men, who are unsatisfied in their Lot: It is no Wonder that Men unlimited

unlimited in their Desires, meet with great Disappointments; for those that have exorbitant and excentrick Desires, must have great Hopes, as likewise great Disappointments: Therefore it were certainly your Advantage, to be studying to compendize and abridge your Desires after these Things that are here below: For as one spoke well, He conceived that the greatest Riches of a Man did consist in Poverty of Desires, and in being content with that Lot, wherein God had placed him. There are only these three Things that befall a Christian, under which it is great Difficulty for him to attain to Contentment; there is the Loss of his predominant Lust and Idol, especially if it be any Whit refined, and veiled under the Vail and Vizard of any Virtue, as if one be given unto the seeking of the Applause of the World, there is nothing under which there is so great a Difficulty to exercise Contentment, as in the losing of that Applause, our Hearts oft-times crying forth, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* And certainly oft-times our Lusts die unto us, before we die unto them, which is the Occasion, that our living Lusts do sit down and lament over the Graves of our buried Idols, and wish, that they may awake and stand up from the Dead. And we shall only say to such, *Woe unto you, when all Men shall speak well of you,* which may hinder People from pursuing after that Idol, but much more especially that Word, *John 5. 44. How can ye believe, that seek Glory one of another;* which Words seem to import an Inconsistency betwixt the Exercise of Faith, and betwixt the Exercise of Pursuing after Idols.

There is this likewise that befallerh a Christian, under which it is a great Difficulty for him to attain to Contentment, and that is the Continuance and lengthning forth of any Affliction that doth befall him: Oft-times a Christian, when first he meeteth with his Cross,

Cross will salute & embrace it, and will cry forth, *This is a grief, and I must bear it*: But when the thread of our Affliction is spun out unto any length, then we begin to be discontent and cry forth, *Hast thou found me, O thou mine Enemy?* This was clear in the Exercise of *Jab*, who when first he met with his Cross, did express divine Contentment under a most eminent way, crying forth, *Blessed be the Name of the Lord*; when he was made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights were appointed for him, then he crieth forth, *I choose Strangling and Death, rather than Life*. And we shall only say to such, Be much in the Meditation of that precious and immense hope, and go up to the Top of Mount *Pisgah*, and there be with *Moses* in the viewing of that Land which is afar off. As likewise, Study to Seal that divine Conclusion, *that he doth all Things well*.

There is this, *Thirdly*, which befalleth a Christian, under which he hath a great difficulty to exercise Contentment, which is, poverty and want in the World. *Solomon*, who was well acquainted with his own Heart, and knew well his Unsuirableness to bear such a cross, crieth forth, *Prov. 30. 8, 9 Give me not poverty, lest I steal, and take the Name of my God in vain*. It is certain, that to Exercise Faith upon God, for the receipt of common Mercies, is more difficult than to exercise Faith on God for our eternal Salvation, and for our Interest in *Jesus Christ*. And we conceive that the Reason why a Christian findeth great difficulty, to exercise Faith upon God for the Receipt of these Common mercies, than for the receiving of that cardinal and unspeakable mercy, *Salvation through Jesus Christ*, to be either this, that Faith, when it is exercised upon the one, must simply and immediately rely upon the Omnipotency and Faithfulness of God, abstracted from all other Props and Considerations; for there Sense and Reason doth contradict the

the Exercise of Faith ; but when Christians do exercise Faith upon God, for Righteousness and Salvation, they ordinarily have either somewhat of sense, or somewhat of holy Reason, that doth underprop and help their Faith ; And this likewise is the Occasion of it, that not so ordinarily a Christian is put to the Exercise of the one, as unto the Exercise of the other : But believe me, It is no small difficulty, for a Christian to add confidence upon God, when he is reduced unto a low and pinching estate in the World. And we shall only say to such, who murmur and repine under such an estate, Cast your Eyes upon him who was the Heir of all Things, of whom it is recorded, *That he had not so much as where to lay his Head.* As likewise, cast your Eyes upon a number of that precious cloud of Witnesses, who are now entred into the everlasting Possession of that precious and excellent Lot, who were constrained to wander in dens and caves of the Earth, having sheep and Goats-skins for their clothing. Ye are now in the state of your Minority, and therefore ye are rich but in hope and Expectation, and so ye may dispense, though ye be not rich in Possession ; though we may say, A Christian that has *him who is all in all*, must of necessity enjoy all in all.

Now that which we shall further speak upon the divine Quality of Contentment, besides these Things which we spoke at the last Occasion ; we shall point out a little the difficulty of attaining unto Contentment under every Lot & Estate that a Christian falls in : The difficulty of it is fully shown in that Word *I have learned*, as it were in speaking so much as this, once Paul was an ignorant of this mysterious Lesson of divine Contentment, but he was instructed by him, who is the Prince of Pastors, by whom he did attain to the knowledge of this : And this speaketh forth the difficulty of it, that a Christian must be much in Self-examination, and Self-searching before he can attain unto Contentment ; There is somewhat of the

pointed at, *Psal. 4. 4. Examine your selves upon your beds, and there is a promise annexed to this, and ye shall be still, or be still: And the Influence that self-examination hath upon this divine quality of Contentment, may not only appear in this, that a Christian who is much in reflecting upon himself, taketh up ordinarily a Suitableness betwixt the Crofs and his Humour, as it were, he seeth infinite Wisdom shining, in carving out such a Lot and Dispensation unto him, and so is constrained to adore the unsearchable riches of the Wisdom of God: As likewise, its influence may be shown in this, that a Christian, who is much in Self-examination, doth behold such spots and blemishes in himself, that he is forced to wonder, that it is not worse with him, and so is constrained to glorify God in the fire. I confess, it may be a wonder, that this is not a wonder unto a Christian every Day, that he is not consumed, and cut off from his right Hand. O! That ye would once be much in the study of your self: That ancient advice of a Heathen *γινώσκεις σεαυτόν, know your self*, were worthy to be practised by all Christians; we are too much roving abroad, and too little at home. It is reported of some Beasts, that they have Eyes to see abroad, but have no Eyes to see at home; which no doubt is the Case and Exercise of the most part who have lived in these Days.*

This likewise pointeth forth the difficulty of attaining to this duty of Contentment, that a Christian before he can attain it, must be much in the Exercise of these two cardinal Graces, *Faith and Love*: Certainly, till once we be studying the Exercise of them, Contentment will be at a low and weak standing with us: And no doubt, the Exercise of Faith, not only concluding our Interest in *Jesus Christ*, and in sealing that Conclusion, that *he is ours*, is most necessary for attaining of Contentment, but likewise the Exercise

of Faith for attaining of Contentment may be shown in this, that Faith is that Grace, which is the best Interpreter of the dispensations of God: This may be recorded to the Commendation of the Grace of Faith, that it knoweth not, what it is to bring up a bad report upon God. And certainly, as long as we consult with these three bad Counsellors, Sense, Reason, and Misbelief, about the Dispensations of God, this will be the result of that Counsel, to have sorrow in your Heart daily; but study to imploy that wise Counsel for Faith, for which sometimes, because it is so intelligent a Grace, is called *Understanding*, as is clear from Col. 2. 2. Now this is clear, that Faith hath influence upon Contentment, 2. Sam. 23. 5. where David from this, that God had made with him an everlasting Covenant, he crieth forth, I am not much anxious, though other Things should fail, and *though my House should not be so with God*. As likewise it is clear, Psal. 142. 4, 5. Where the Exercise of Faith upon this, that God was his Portion, made him with patience to submit, *though all refuge should fail him, and though none upon his right Hand, or his left Hand should care for his Soul*: As likewise, Psal. 37. 1. compared with Verse 3. where he presseth that Duty of trusting in God, by which they may obviate the Exercise of discontent and fretting. Love likewise, no doubt must be exercised, before a Christian do attain unto this divine quality of Contentment. There are these two precious properties of Love which are given, 1. Cor. 13. 4, 5. *Love endureth long, and love thinketh no Evil*, which, no doubt, have great influence upon Contentment: We confess, Love sometimes is the most impatient Grace of a Christian, and sometimes the most patient Grace of a Christian. In a Manner, Love when it is in its most vigorous Exercise, will endure more sad Afflictions than Faith: Faith sometimes will be languishing, and giving over,

which

when love will support and strengthen it, it being afraid to seal that woful Conclusion, *that he is not ours*; love knoweth not what it is to intertain jealous thoughts of him, who is the Lover, *it thinketh no Evil*: And certainly, when the grace of love is in its vigorous Exercise, it is most tender to aſt any thing, by which the Perſon that is loved may be wronged, or a bad report may be brought up upon him. A Chriſtian that is united unto precious *Chriſt*, by that golden and inviſible Chain of his Beauty, and tranſcendent excellency, can with patience endure the Loſs of all Things beſide *Chriſt*; love is peremptory in nothing but this, the enjoyment of the loved: And love is ſorrowful for nothing, but the loſs of him who is loved: He moveth in ſo high a ſphere, and is ſo far elevated above all Things that are here below, that in a Manner, he poſſeſſeth his Soul in patience in the miſt of thoſe Revolutions and Changes that are here below: In a Manner, the Grace of love doth incorporate a Chriſtian in *Jeſus Chriſt*, and doth make him to dwell in Chriſt as his Mansion-house, and ſo he is not much taken up with thoſe Things that are abroad.

There is this likewise, which ſpeaketh forth the difficulty of attaining unto divine Contentment, and it is this, A Chriſtian muſt be in the Exercise of the Grace of Mortification to all theſe paſſing and tranſient Vanities of the World. Do not theſe Riſings and Murmurings of the Spirit, ſpeak the little Exercise of Mortification that is amongſt us? for if we were once mortified to the World, we ſhould then exerciſe Contentment under every Lot: This is clear from the comparing of theſe two Places, *Pſal. 119. 29* where *David* ſaith, *I have ſeen an end of all perfection*; which ſpeaketh forth that diſtinct diſcovery that he had of the Vanity of the World: In a Manner he had it brought within his Sight, which

is one of the most unerring senses, compared with that most remarkable Place, which breathes forth much of divine Contentment in him, 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26. where he saith, *But if he say, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let him do unto me, as seemeth good unto him.* Here in a manner, is David making a Resignation of his Crown, and seeing an end of the Perfection of that glistening and passing Vanity. As likewise, it may be shown from the paralleling of these two Places, Gal. 6. 14. where Paul saith of himself, *I am crucified to the World, and World is crucified unto me:* In a manner, Paul and the World made a sorrowless parting, as two dead Men parting one from another: And the words that we have read, where he breatheth forth this divine quality of Contentment, I think certainly a Christian reflecting upon the Changeableness, Inconstancy & Vexation of Things here below, will not be much moved with the loss of them. It was upon this ground that Heathens did attain unto such a length in this divine quality of Contentment; for they beholding, that fear and desires where the two unseparable Companions of those that had most of these fancied delights of the World: For even those, that have the greatest abundance, are vexed betwixt these two Passions, *fear and desire*: Fear to lose what they have attained, and desire to attain more. We conceive, that it is a remarkable thing that is recorded of Sesostris King of Egypt, who was so Ambitious, that he would needs have his Chariot drawn with four Kings, one of which had his Eye continually upon the Motion of the wheel of the Chariot, which the King observing, did ask him the ground why he did so exercise himself? He did most fitly reply, *It putteth me in mind of the mutability and Changeableness of the Things of the World; for, saith he, the highest part of the wheel is instantly the lowest part, and the lowest part of the wheel is instantly the*

the highest, which moved that ambitious Prince to desist from so ambitious a practice: And believe me, if ye would read that Inscription upon the fore-head of all Things, *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*, ye might easily attain unto Contentment.

There is this, *Fourthly*, which speaketh forth the difficulty of attaining unto Contentment, that a Christian before he win to it, must necessarily be mortified unto that innate and co-natural Idol, Pride: Pride must be once brought low, before Contentment can be attained: We conceive, Discontent and Pride have sworn a Covenant of Agreement, that they shall be undivided in their Life, and undivided in Death, they are chained together by an unchangeable Chain of Amity; and believe me, it is impossible for a Christian to be discontent, but he must of necessity be proud. And upon the contrary, a Christian that is proud, he must of necessity be a discontented one; for there is nothing that is the Mother of Contentment so much as Humility, which moveth a Christian silently to bear his yoke, and to sit down, and put his Mouth in the dust, because he hath done it. In a Manner, a Humble one, and one that hath distinct Knowledge of his own baseness, knoweth not what it is to cry forth, *Why am I thus?* Such a one is much in admiration, and little under murmuring, much in Praise, and little in complaint.

There is this, *Lastly*, which pointeth forth the difficulty of it, A Christian cannot win to Contentment, without he be much in heavenly Mindedness, and have his Spirit in a spiritual and heavenly Frame. There is somewhat of this pointed at, *Joh. 14. 1.* compared with the 2. v. where Christ proposing a remedy unto the discontentment of the Disciples, *that their Souls should not be troubled*, He doth begin a discourse of Heaven, *that in his Fathers House were many Mansions*, and that they had an Interest into it: As likewise, there is somewhat of this pointed at, *Matth. 6. 25, 26.* Where to obviate

to obviate their talking thought what they should eat, or what they should drink, or wherewith they should be clothed, he desireth them *to seek first the Kingdom of God.* And certainly one that is much taken up in the Contemplation of eternal Life, and who is viewing these precious and endless delights that are at his Right hand moveth in a most composed and divine Frame: In a Manner, he drowneth the thoughts of his present Miseries, in those precious depths of Eternity: He knoweth that one Moment of the enjoyment of precious *Christ*, shall fully recompense and make up all those Sorrows that he hath met with: I know not what shall be the thoughts of Christians, when that volume of the Mercies of the *Lord* shall be presented unto them, which they have met with here below: How may they be filled with Admiration to see that Book written within and without, of the Receipts of most singular Demonstrations of his Love.

We shall, *Secondly*, speak a little to provoke you to the pursuit of this divine quality, and so to these Advantages that a Christian hath by exercising Contentment under every Lot. We conceive it is so excellent a Grace, this Grace of Contentment, that it is indeed a Compound of these five Graces, Faith, Humility, Patience, Hope and Mortification; in a Manner, Contentment is the Result of all these Graces, exercising themselves in one; and except those be in a most vigorous Exercise, that absolute Contentment is not easily to be attained: But no doubt, it must be an excellent thing that deriveth its pedigree and descent from so high and excellent Things, as those precious Graces of the Spirit. But the first advantage that a Christian hath by divine Contentment, under his saddest Lot, is this. It doth advance a Christian unto most high Fellowship and Correspondence with *God*, as likewise a contented one receiveth most
sweet

sweet Manifestations of the Presence and Fellowship of God with him under his Cross: It is most certain, that Contentment, when it is attained, is ordinarily accompanied with most nearness and Correspondence with him; there is somewhat of this pointed at, *Heb. 13. 5.* Where pressing that Doctrine of Contentment, he saith, *The Lord will not leave you, nor forsake you;* which, though we confess it be principally understood of his Providence, yet it may include the manifestation of his Presence: As likewise that in *Jam 4. 7.* *Humble your selves under his Hand,* which he is pressing from this duty of Contentment, *and he shall lift you up:* And no doubt, that Invitation doth oftentimes come to a contented Christian, *Come unto me from Amana, and from the top of Shenir, and from the mount Lebanon,* *Can 4. 8.* Christ loveth to dwell with one that walketh with a composed and silent Frame of Spirit: And the reason why a contented Christian enjoyeth much of God under his Cross, is because he is much in Prayer: It is impossible for a discontented Christian to pray to any purpose under his Cross, for he wanteth that divine qualification that is required in Prayer, *to lift up his Hands without Wrath;* the Soul is in such a confused and distempered Frame, *It is so troubled, that it cannot speak;* this is clear, from *Psal. 77. 4. Verse,* Where David had this advantage by his discontent, *I am so troubled, (saith he) that I cannot speak:* Though we conceive, that there is that which is imitable to David in that case, that a Christian when he cannot speak, he may make this Prayer, *I am so troubled that I cannot speak,* which was David's practice in that Psalm. There is this second advantage that a Christian hath by the Exercise of divine Contentment, The Want of it doth exceedingly obstruct and hinder a Christians improving of the Cross for his advantage: A Christian that is discontent cannot receive any advantage by his Cross:

Cross: There is somewhat of this pointed, *Heb. 12. 11.* Where the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness flow to a Christian that is exercised under his Cross, which no doubt doth take in the divine quality of Contentment. There are these three precious advantages that a Christian may have by his Cross, which discontent doth exceedingly obstruct, there is the exercise of Humility, and the Exercise of Prayer, and the Exercise of Mortification: One that is Discontent doth obstruct that great advantage of the Cross, even Humility; he is so much in repining against the dispensations of God, that he cannot at all sit down, and fold his Feet, and quietly bear his yoke. O! but Contentment includeth in its Bosom much divine Humility: In a Manner, a Christian when he is content, is clothed with it: Discontentment is the Mother of Pride, and doth add Fewel unto that Fire: Discontentment doth likewise obstruct Mortification and Conformity with God, which is the precious end of the Cross, *he doth chastise us, that we may be partakers of his Holiness:* And this is the Fruit of all these Things, to take away our Sins: And certainly, a discontented Christian cannot be a Christian taken up in Mortification: yea it is most certain, that a Christian may lose more by one Hours Discontent than he may gain in many Days, yea, on this side of Eternity. O! to what a length may Discontent lead one? Likewise it doth obstruct the Exercise of Prayer, which is a precious End of the Cross, *in their Affliction, then they will seek me early, and when my chastising Hand is upon them, they will then pour forth their Prayers into my Bosom:* But one that is in a distempered and discontented Frame, is incapacitate to go about this duty of Prayer; he is so much in conversing with his Cross, that he cannot be much in conversing with God. And that is certainly one great defect in a Christian, that they are more taken up in studying the

the disadvantages of the Cross, than in studying the advantages of it; the most part of us will be Orators like *Cicero*, in declaiming our Calamities, and in setting them forth to the full, as is clear in *Job*, who proved a most elegant Orator in setting forth his calamities; but in the Exercise of Praise, our Tongues cleave to the Roof of our Mouth, and we are silent unto God. There is this third Advantage that a Christian hath by the Exercise of Contentment, It doth obviate, and obstruct many Temptations, that a Christian is liable unto by his Discontentment. I know not any Sin in Scripture, that hath produced such bad and woful effects, as the Sin of Discontentment: What made *Ahithophel* to seek a cord, and go hang himself, was it not his Discontent? Discontent is the Mother of most sad and desperate Resolutions; for we cannot submit unto our Cross, and therefore we study to extricate our selves out of our Cross, by involving & entering our selves into that endless and unsupportable Cross. Therefore we would desire you under your Afflictions to study Contentment: O! what Atheistical thoughts will lodge in the bosom of one that is discontent: We may see them clearly in the practice of *David*, who cried forth, under his Discontentment, *I have cleansed my Heart in vain, and washed my Hands in innocence*. Certainly, there is nothing that will occasion the want of the Faith of the existency of a Deity, and that there is not a God, so much as this of Discontentment. There is this fourth Advantage that a Christian hath by his Contentment, It maketh the Cross most easie to a Christian: would you know what is the greatest ingredient of the Heaviness of any Cross, it is Discontent. It is certain, by it we make our Chain more heavy, and more unsupportable upon our Necks; whileas, if we were studying this divine quality of Contentment, it should abate much of the Bitterness of the Cross: we

we may say to one that hath attained unto Contentment, they may cry forth, *The Bitterness of Death is past,* and may thus triumph over their Cross, *O Cross where is thy Sting, and O Affliction, where is your Victory?* Certainly, Discontent is that which maketh us to sit down, and cry forth, *My stroke is heavier than my groaning.* Did you never know what it was to bear your affliction with much inward Joy and Peace of Mind, when you had this Grace of Contentment.

There is this advantage likewise that a Christian hath by exercising Contentment under his Cross, that he meeteth with: It is a compendious Way for a Christian to win to an out-gate under his Cross. Would you know what is the most compendious Way, to have the Threed of your Afflictions spun out unto a long length? Then study discontentment: But would you know what is the most spiritual and compendious way to have the Rod taken off, and to have God no more to turn about the Face of his Throne? Then study Contentment: In a Manner, the Cross hath gotten and obtained that End and Errand why it was sent, when you do attain to Contentment and Humility under it: We may say of the Sin of Discontent, that it is a most irrational and reasonless Sin, for you cannot by your Discontent extricate your selves out of your Calamities, all the Advantage that you have by it is this, to make your Bonds stronger upon your Spirits, and to have your Fetters and Chains lying more heavily upon you.

There is this Advantage likewise, that a Christian hath by the Exercise of Contentment under every Rod that he meeteth with, it is that divine quality of the Soul, by which a Christian doth attain to Mortification unto the Pleasures and Vanities of a World. O! How sweetly will a contented Christian under the loss of Things here below, speak to the dispraise of

of these fancied Images? It is a poor sight, to behold a living Substance tied unto shadows by these two Iron Chains of *Love and Delight*. Ought we not to study so much holy Ambition, and spiritual Generosity, as to undervalue all Things that are below God, as being below? In a manner, as *Jonadab* spoke to *Amnon*, 2 Sam. 13. 4. *Why are thou being a King's son, lean from Day to Day?* We may likewise bespeak the Heirs of the Promise, and those that are begotten by a lively Hope, who being the Children of him who is the King of Kings. Do you wax lean for the loss or want of these Things that are here below? Have ye not a Kingdom? And why then should you repine at the loss of these Things, which are but passing and transient vanities? That which is the Great Idol of the World, *Silver and Gold*, what is it but more refined Dust? It is white and yellowed clay: And we conceive, that much of the Excellency of it doth consist in the Estimation of Men, that they have so valued it: But one that hath the Assurance of Eternal Life, and that God is theirs, may walk thorow the Wilderness with Joy. We confess, it is an evil amongst the Heirs of Promise, that they love to go to Heaven thorow a most easie and pleasant Way; they love to walk to that, alas, of Everlasting Rest, thorow a Valley of Roses; but we must not meet with two Heavens; it is abundance, if we have that one Eternal and Everlasting Heaven. And as for the cause of Discontent under our Cross, or any Calamity that we meet with, we conceive, Pride and Want of Mortification are those two catholick and general Grounds of all our Discontents and Impatience.

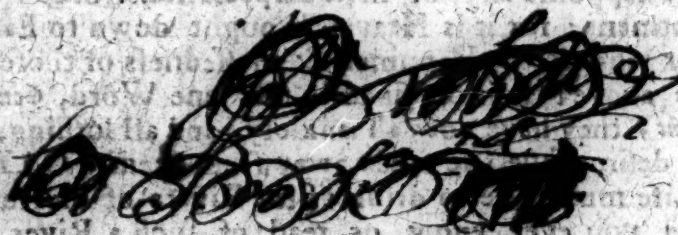
We shall shut up our Discourse upon this divine quality of Contentment; desiring that Men that have abundance of the World, may study Contentment, though this may seem a paradox unto many, why those

those that have enough, should yet be desired to pursue after Contentment : We conceive, there are none more discontent, than those who have the greatest Occasion of Contentment, their desires are so much wedded unto Things here below, that that voice is never heard among them, *It is enough, and I am satisfied* : I conceive, that may fully confute that vain Opinion that Christians, and others do entertain, that if they had such a Competency of the World, that they would be discontent no more, but would silently make on their way : and that which is the ground of their discontent is (as they alledged) the want of a competency of Subsistence : I shall only say to you, that which is recorded of *Alexander*, who after he had purchased the Possession of the World, he was so far from attaining to Contentment, that (as it is recorded of him) he sat down and wept, because there was not another World to purchase. And believe me, this is most undeniable, that if you cannot attain to Contentment under your present Lot, it is impossible for you to attain to Contentment when your Lot is better : It is only the delusion of Satan, under which the evil of your Discontent is veiled. But as for those that have abundance of these worldly goods, we shall press this Exhortation upon them, which is, *Prou. 23. 4. Labour not to be rich*, which is a thing that ye will not easily close with, though certainly riches (as he there most divinely speaketh) *are a thing that is not*. Now this is most clear that there is a necessity of pressing these, who have abundance of the World to be content, where *Paul* doth subjoin in the following words, *I know* (saith he) *how to abound*. People might have imagined, that is no great Lesson : But believe me, it is a great, if not greater, than the other, which is that by which we would press Contentment to those that are poor in each Lot and Estate.

that they fall in here below : Know this, the Day is coming, when ye shall acknowledge infinite wisdom in Guiding you to Heaven by that way. O give *Christ* a negative Vote in the Dispensation of your Lot, and be content to be regulated by him, who is that Wonderful Counsellor, who, Though he lead you by a way that you know not, yet take *Christ's* advice upon implicate Faith, for he knoweth not what it is to disappoint any of their Expectations. Study Contentment; for it is Heaven brought down to Earth : For what is the Happiness & Blessedness of those that are above? It is confined in this one Word, *Contentment*; they have now all anxiety, and all longing, and all desires, are one taken away from them. O! What a Life must it be to drink of the Rivers of Pleasures? Did you ever know, or read of such a River, the waters whereof are pure Delight and Pleasure? When we shall sit down, and be overjoyed with those Consolations, that shall flow from his face, when we shall draw forth that endless Line and Period of Eternity, in having Joy and Light flowing in, Admiration and Praise flowing out : Believe me, the gleanings of a Christian, are better than the vintage of a Reprobate; *a little that a righteous Man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked*; For it is a Messenger of hope, of that more enduring Substance which *Christ* shall give : And since it is the Exercise of those that are above, let it be the Exercise of those that are below, that there may be a sweet Conformity and Harmony betwixt the Practice of that higher House, and the Practice of this lower House, that we may have our Souls united unto him, who is perfumed with all the powders of the Merchant, and whose Garments do smell of myrrh and Aloes. Believe this, Time shortly is to have a Period, and Eternity is to come.

Let

Let a Christian comfort himself in this, Eternity's at Hand, when they shall hear that Voice, and truth sealed by the Oath of an Angel, *Time shall be no more* : Let that precious Day come, and let all other Days pass away.



F I N I S.